LITTLE SERMONS
from the
PENTATEUCH

HENRY W. FROST

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Little sermons from the
Pentateuch

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LITTLE SERMONS *from the* PENTATEUCH

Meditations on Texts in the Bible's
First Five Books

By
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1

A BEGINNING

"In the beginning God."—Gen. 1:1.

God nowhere argues the fact of His existence. He takes it for granted that He is and that we know that He is. And He is able to do this without violence to reason, for He has sent forth His sevenfold spirit into the world and has written primal truths upon the hearts of all men. Illumination, therefore, precedes revelation, and, to a degree, explains it; though revelation supplements illumination and makes it intelligible and sure. Hence, we have both primary and secondary knowledge, the one by the Spirit direct, and the other by the Spirit through the Word. And when each is properly understood, there is no conflict between them.

The revealing of God, then, is the beginning—as it is the ending—of all knowledge. And here it is the beginning of the written Word. And what a splendid beginning it is! It is, indeed, exactly what we could wish it to be; before all created things and beings; before the record of their creation and preservation—God! There is no possibility here of "blind force," of "a fortuitous concourse of atoms," of "age-long process evolving something out of nothing." Here, first, powerful, active, wise, and

benignant, is Elohim, the Creator. Before all and through all, He is. As the Psalmist exclaims, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

This, then, is his starting-point with us. Suddenly, gloriously, He breaks forth before our eyes in all the majesty of His being as the Strong and Good One, who is about to relate Himself to the world and man. We are called thus, at the very threshold of the holy temple of the Word, to bow and worship Him.

"For Jehovah is a great God,
And a great King above all gods;
In his hand are the deep places of the earth;
The heights of the mountains are his also;
The sea is his, and he made it;
And his hands formed the dry land:
O come, let us worship and bow down,
Let us kneel before Jehovah our Maker!"

2

NO NEED OF DARKNESS

"God said, Let there be light: and there was light."—Gen. 1:3.

THIS word went forth when there was no light. When all was unilluminated dark, when dark was black, and black was gloom—the God of Light spoke darkness into light and it was light. What a Creator-God Jehovah is!

And how easily God works. There is no summoning to His aid of extraneous forces, no rising from His throne, no lifting up of His hands, no noise, no confusion. He simply speaks, and it is done.

Nor does He first create man that He may have human aid. He is self-sufficient and He needs no help. Later, He will create man, that the creature may enjoy and glorify the Creator. But, now, He sits in the universe alone, before all and above all. He alone plans and acts; and behold, out of darkness, in the midst of the darkness, greater than the darkness, there is light!

Moreover, this is not the last time He will create light. At the gates of Eden, at Abel's altar, over the wreck and ruin of the flooded world, at Abraham's sacrifice, before Moses in the burning bush,

on the Mount of Transfiguration, out from the gloom of Calvary's Cross, by Pentecostal tongues of fire, in the deep darkness of every soul born from above—again, and again, and yet again, He will flash His glory forth. And all because He is the God of Light, and it is His nature to give light.

There is, therefore, no need of darkness. Darkness there is—deep, brooding, frowning, overwhelming; but it is here in spite of God and light. For since that primal day, ages ago, and especially since that morn of Resurrection when God "brought life and immortality to light," the light has shone, ever clearer and brighter. So then, darkened soul, bring your darkness to God, and lie before Him passively, attempting nothing and receiving all. There in that unrelieved gloom you will hear the voice once more speaking: "Let there be light." And from thenceforth you will be able to say with another, who brought his darkness to God: "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

3

GREAT LIGHTS

"God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night."—Gen. 1:16.

WHY should there be any night? Why is it not one long day, with no darkness at all? If God could say, "Let there be light," why did He not say, "Let it all be light and light all the time?" Night is gloom and gloom is terrifying. Night hides evil and evil is opposed to God. How much better it would be to have all day and no night. Yet it says, "God divided the light from the darkness;" and hence, while He made the light, He allowed the darkness to remain. What mystery it all is, from the beginning even until now! And what mystery it will ever remain, until there come the new heavens and earth, where the word will at last be fulfilled: "There shall be no night there!"

Meanwhile, how glad we ought to be that God made "great lights," and that He made, not only the sun, but also the moon. What a poor place the day would be without just such a sun as shines in yonder heaven! And how infinitely worse the night would be if the great moon did not hold its face sunward and earthward just as it does! So, then,

God is more than a God of mystery; He is also a God of beneficent grace. Is it all dark? He creates the sun. Is there night? He creates the moon. He gives all that He can give—in view of His highest purposes and man's present needs. And as for the remainder of darkness, He gives sleep and rest and refreshment—till the day dawns and the shadows flee away.

Then let us rejoice in the "great lights," whether they be the great sun and moon or those other beneficent gifts of God, great saints. So long as the darkness remains, physical or spiritual, we need the one and the other, and we are to accept all as the Creator's gifts, and so with thanksgiving. "For all things are yours," whether it be, on the one hand sun or moon, or, on the other, "Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas."

4

THE STARS ALSO

"He made the stars also."—Gen. 1:16.

WHAT! the God who made the sun and moon made the stars also! the twinkling, unilluminating stars! The stars, so far away, so unrelated to man's vision and need! We can understand how He made the great sun and moon. But how is it that He also made the tiny stars?

A little girl was once walking with her father, looking at the stars. At last she said: "Oh, father, if the wrong side of heaven is so beautiful, what must the right side be?" Exactly; God, also has His point of view, and some things were made for Himself as well as for us. So, then, it is not of prime importance that we should get good out of everything, but rather that God should be satisfied and glorified. And when God looked down on the "right side" of the stars He said: "Behold, it is very good."

As a matter of fact, however, we do get good out of the stars. What night the moon fails in its shining the stars give us light. That northern star has guided many a storm-tossed ship to its desired haven. One star led the Wise Men to Bethlehem's manger, and the Christ. Above all, every star in

that upper temple speaks glory; as said David—whose soul had often traversed the starry paths of light to heaven's glorious throne—"Praise ye him," not only "sun and moon," but also "all ye stars of light."

And so the smaller gifts of God are as beneficent as the larger, whether they be stars or men. "All things are yours"; both the sun and moon and also the stars, both Paul and Peter and also Apollos. And remember, some time when you do not see any beauty and splendour in stars or men, that God does; and hence, while all are for you, that all are pre-eminently for Him. While God is in heaven, no flower "is born to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air"; nor is any star doomed to be unadmired, nor any saint to be unappreciated.

5

REST

"On the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested."—Gen. 2:2.

ONE of the most wonderful things about God is His equipoise. Never for a moment, in all His varied relationships and experiences, has He ever lost His balance. Here is the perfect adjustment between work and rest. He worked for six days; then, on the seventh, He rested.

How different is man. His temptation is either to work all of the time or to rest all of the time. I heard once of a successful business man who, after attending church regularly for seven years, made the confession that he had never heard a sermon in all that time, since he had carried his business with him into the pew; this man had worked, not six, but seven days a week. Then we all know the type of man or woman who avoids all serious work or else simply plays at working, never doing thoroughly anything which is undertaken; such a one would fain rest not one, but seven days a week.

In all such cases as these, there is no true perspective, and hence no true proportion. But with

the perfect One, there is a time for work and another for rest. Each experience is in its proper place, the one balancing the other.

And note, in this particular, as in all others, how deity characterized the life of Christ in the days of his flesh. He worked as no man worked. Then He rested as none other rested. And as for His teaching to His disciples, it was the same: "Go work!" and then, "Come ye yourselves apart . . . and rest a while."

O man of God, be like God! Work, as if everything depended upon you. Then rest, as if nothing did. With such a true balance of life, both working and resting will be to the glory of God.

6

A PERSON—GOD

"The Lord God made the earth and the heavens."—Gen. 2:4.

At a recent meeting of the British Association, held at Dundee, the president, Professor Schafer, spoke upon the origin and nature of life. Among other things he said: "Setting aside, as devoid of scientific foundation, the idea of immediate supernatural intervention in the production of life, we are not only justified in believing, but compelled to believe, that living matter must have owed its origin to causes similar in character to those which have been instrumental in producing all other forms of matter in the universe; in other words, to a process of gradual evolution."

This sounds very learned and conclusive. But two considerations are to be kept in mind. First, evolution in creation is at best—what Darwin said it was—a hypothesis, for it has never been proved; and second, even if we grant the law of evolution, we must ask, "Who created the law and set it going?" As to the last, laws do not make themselves, especially laws which prove themselves so powerful and full of wisdom as to produce the highest forms of life, intelligence, and development. When one

concedes such powers to law, that moment law becomes a Person, and that Person becomes Deity.

After all, one is thrown back upon the statements which begin Holy Scripture, and which must stand at the head of all true scientific statement concerning creation: "In the beginning God"; and, "The Lord God made the earth and the heavens." Commence thus, and one has adequate explanation of all that follows; commence otherwise, and he is left in darkness and confusion, with no explanation of multiform life, either in its beginning, continuance, or ending.

7

A SOUL—MAN

"God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."—Gen. 2:7.

IMMORTALITY is nowhere taught in the Bible, in the sense of definite statement and analytical definition. The reason is, there is no need. For since God stooped over man and breathed life into his nostrils, he has not only been immortal, but, also, he has known that he is immortal. Hence, for a person to reach the conclusion that he is not immortal, is to deny the process and consequence of his unique creation, and, also, deliberately to stifle the spirit within him, which unbidden and instinctively, reaches out after unending life. Immortality, therefore, is taken for granted in the Word from the first and it becomes the foundation upon which God builds up all His appeals and warnings to sinful men.

But God gave much more than immortality, in the act of breathing life into man's nostrils. He had already created animals, and, therefore, beast-souls (Gen. 1:20, margin); but He had not, before, created a "living soul," that is, a man-soul, includ-

ing the spirit, which no animal has. Man became then, as Paul sets forth (Heb. 4:12; 1 Thess. 5:23), "spirit, soul and body"; and it is the spirit within him which is undying and which brings him into responsible and vital relationship with Him who is the Spirit. No one ever saw an animal kneeling down and praying; but even unconverted men have often been seen to kneel and pray, especially when they were in trouble. So, then, the spirit differentiates man from all known created beings, raising him infinitely above the highest forms of beast-life and fixing a gulf between animal and man-life, which no evolutionary process ever has crossed, or ever will cross.

This is the explanation of man's worth as compared with animal worth, a single man being valued above all the beasts which have been since the world began until now: "And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the Lord, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep"; all these and many more, and at last God's dearly beloved Son, all for the sake of men, and of a single man. In short, God made man in His own image, to be one who should enjoy and glorify Him forever, and He values him accordingly. How infinitely sad it is, then, especially in view of Calvary's Cross, that one such soul should ever be lost!

8

THE VOICE

"The Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?"—Gen. 3:9.

FROM the equity standpoint, God would have been justified in letting Adam go. He has done this, is doing it, and will yet do it, in respect to as many as refuse to turn back to Him. But grace led Him to call in hope, that His creature-child might hear and return, for He willeth not that any should perish. So, then, when Adam had no desire to seek God, God sought him.

And God found Adam, and also his wife, as a shepherd finds two wandering and lost sheep of his flock. Drawing their reluctant souls to Himself; extracting from them their halting confessions; awakening within them their trembling faith, He covers them, at last, beneath the skins of the sacrificial victims, and restores them to Himself. Much had been lost—primal innocency, obedience, and communion; but much also was gained—the revelation of God as the Author of all grace, love, and redemption, and, for man, eternal life. So where sin did abound, grace did much more abound; and where man's sun went down in dark eclipse, the Sun of Righteousness arose with heal-

ing in His wings, to stand in God's firmament, as its central and pre-eminent glory forever.

Moreover: the Voice has never since ceased to cry. It is because it called one day, yearningly, persuasively, that you and I are Christians. And it is because it calls us, day by day, that we have desire for holiness and fellowship with God. Sometimes in light and joy, sometimes in darkness and sorrow, always by the Spirit and through the Word, the Voice pleads for return, for worship, for communion, for ourselves. This is what Christ meant when He said: "The Father seeketh such to worship him." The love that will not let us go, still yearns and cries out for us, that it may draw us back and take us in. Adam heard the voice and came. Shall we do so? And when we have returned, let us never wander again.

9

IN HIS OWN LIKENESS

"In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him . . . and Adam . . . begat a son in his own likeness."—Gen. —5:1, 3.

THIS is fundamental theology put in a small compass and of a sort which it will be well for us if we never forget. It is another way of saying what Christ said to Nicodemus: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." In other words—as the old philosophers used to say—"like begets like." God could never create a human being other than like Himself; and man can never beget a human being other than like himself. God, then, could not make a person except that one should bear His image; and also man can never make a person, except that one bears his image.

There was, then, no possibility, after the fall, of man's producing any other than a fallen man. Hence, fallen Adam begat fallen Cain and Abel; and fallen Cain begat fallen Enoch; and fallen Enoch begat fallen Irad.

Thus it has gone on from one generation to another, down to the present time, when all the world

is peopled with fallen men, nearly a billion six hundred millions in all. And so it will go on, to the very end. You may put garments on the man who is a savage, and gold lace on the man who is civilized; the one may be a cannibal and feed on human flesh, the other may be an epicurean and feed on culinary dainties; you may call the one a pagan and the other a "Christian"; but they all came from the fallen Adam, and, by nature, are no better than their sire.

Nicodemus was a princely man, the best of his race and time; and it was to him, and of his kind, that the Master said: "Ye *must* be born again." In other words, all the human race is fallen and needs to be born from above. All this is the explanation of the words: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish"; and of these other words: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

10

A WALK WITH GOD

"Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."—Gen. 5:24.

How wonderful is redemption! It not only forgives, but also forgets. That is, its forgiveness is so complete, that forgetfulness is a necessary result. Adam fell, and Enoch was one of his kind, a fallen son of man. But God interposed precious blood, regenerated by His good Spirit, and lo! the estranged and far-off sinner was instantly reconciled and made nigh. And from that moment, on through the days, higher and higher up, at last from earth into heaven, this redeemed one walked with God.

Evidently then, salvation is a perfect thing, that it could so fully restore; manifestly, then, it is a permanent thing, that it could hold in fellowship so long; and beyond all doubting, then, it is a glorious thing that it could bring the heavenly to the earthly and finally take the earthly into the heavenly. And the question is whether Enoch is not still walking with God? If he is—and there can be no doubt of the fact—he has had, since he went home to glory, over five thousand years of companionship and fellowship with Him. And this, for him, is just the

beginning; a little span of bliss out of the endless ages. What an inheritance for having believed; and what a rewarding for having turned his back upon Satan and the world!

It is such an experience as this, from our side, that makes our being a Christian so worth while to us; not so much the escaping from wrath and hell, but the eternal welcome into a Saviour's arms and heart. And it is such an experience, too, from Christ's side, that makes our being a Christian so worth while to Him; for He has infinite longing for companionship and fellowship. For our own sake, then, but above all for Christ's sake, let us walk with Him; until we take that longer walk, one day, from brief fellowship here on earth, to endless fellowship there in heaven.

11

BLESSING OTHERS

"I will bless these . . . and thou shalt be a blessing."—Gen. 12:2.

CHRISTIANS get in this world, spiritually speaking, just about what they want. Let a man desire little blessings, and he gets them. Let him desire big ones, and he gets these. God is always ready to do the big thing. This being the case, it rests with the man to say whether the thing shall be big or little. Jacob, for instance, was well content to hear God say, "I will bless thee." But his grandsire, Abraham, was not a man of that kind. He wanted God's blessing as much as Jacob did, and more; but, when it should come, he desired it to be an overflowing one, enough for himself and also a portion for others. And so God said, "I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing."

And this is just the difference between various Christians of our own day. There are plenty of those who are perfectly content if they get first, salvation, and then a house, food, clothes and, if possible, an automobile. But there are others who can never be satisfied with first, salvation, and then the accessories of life. They are not indifferent to necessities and comforts. They regard these as

the good gifts of God, and are grateful for them. But they reach out beyond them, considering them a means to an end; and that end is to bring blessing to others.

I know a lady who is wealthy and has a beautiful home. There she might live for herself, happy in the Lord and in her surroundings. But, instead, she chooses to make her graystone mansion, at much cost of money and strength, a perfect "cave of Adullam," where God's lame, and halt, and blind find continual refreshment of body and spirit. I know a man who was born a millionaire and who inherited a vast estate, and who could have lived quietly on his place, as happy as a king. But he left all, and went to preach the Gospel to the heathen.

Such saints as these are those who hunger for Abraham's blessing; and they get what they desire. As a result, they will be welcomed, one day, to eternal habitations, by a countless number of souls.

12

POSSESSED POSSESSIONS

"Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee."—Gen. 13:17.

THE Christian walk is a strange combination between faith and works. "I will give it unto thee"; there is where faith came in. "Arise, walk through the land"; there is where works came in. God might promise ever so clearly and fully, and if Abraham remained a "sitter," he would possess nothing. But God, having promised clearly and fully, and Abraham, having got up upon his feet and started moving, he immediately came to the place where he could possess all things. In other words, there had to be three great A's in Abraham's life before he obtained his inheritance: first, Apprehension: he had to take in mentally and spiritually what God was ready to give to him; second, Appreciation: he had to consider the thing offered as worthy of acceptance and deserving of effort to secure; and, third, Appropriation: he had to put the soles of his feet—as Israel did after him—upon his inheritance, before it became his own.

Here, then, is the secret of Christian advancement and enrichment. We, too, have a land of

promise, and we, too, are called upon to "arise and walk through the length and breadth of it." For nothing less than this is the meaning of that word in Ephesians 3:18: "May be able to comprehend" —in the Revised Version it is "apprehend"—"with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height." But there is a difference between the Old Testament inheritance and our own; to Abraham, the Jew, it was horizontal; to us Christians, it is both horizontal and perpendicular.

Arise then, child of God; arise and walk to and fro and up and down! Doing this, God will see to it that you, too, will possess your possessions.

13

A WELL OF WATER

"God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water."—Gen. 21:19.

It is evident that God's blessings are not exclusively for the Abrahams. These get a good deal; but they do not get all. For in God's house there is always enough and to spare—enough for Abraham, and enough for Hagar; enough for prince, and enough for slave; enough for tent, and enough for desert.

There is one condition, however, which must be fulfilled, by each and all. One has got to have eyes to see. If Abraham sees only an Ishmael, he does not get an Isaac; if Hagar sees only desert sands, she does not get a well of water.

Moreover: there may be worse blindness than that of a natural sort. The man in chapter nine of John's Gospel, was blind naturally, but he saw spiritually. And Abraham and Hagar saw naturally, but they were blind spiritually.

So, it was a sad plight, into which this spiritual blindness had brought Hagar. She had put Ishmael under one of the shrubs, and she, herself, had sat down a good way off, so she might not see her boy die; for die he must, since there was nothing

else to expect. One only chance there was; if there should be water, up-springing water, in a desert sand! And the eyes, seeing, and yet blinded by grief and shame, and possibly anger, look this way and that—and see nothing! Then God wipes away the tears and gives His poor distracted child a quiet heart. Suddenly, her eyes are opened, and lo! right at her feet, where it has been all the time, she sees a well of water!

How like all this was, to the experience at Jacob's well, when Christ showed that other needy woman another well of water, even Himself. And the old story, becoming new in Samaria, may become newer still, just now, if we will. For God, even in our desert, with our dearest heart-treasure put away to die, is able to open wide our eyes, to give us to see the well of living water beside us, and so to restore to us, our hope and joy.

14

A HUMBLED CONQUEROR

"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day."—Gen. 32:24.

THE story of Jacob's wrestling with God, is really that of God's wrestling with Jacob. It is probable that this was not the way Jacob would have put it, at least, at the beginning of the conflict; for he seems to have had a very good opinion of himself when the wrestling-match began, as, also, for a long way through it. But toward the end, it is nothing less than certain that he would have stated the case quite differently; and ever after that, if you had met him, he would have talked about the night when the Lord drew near, and withstood him face to face.

The truth of the matter is, Jacob was going up into the Promised Land, full of himself. He had two wives, two women-servants, eleven sons, and flocks and herds unending. In other words, he had done well, and he knew, beyond disputing, that he was quite a personage. And now, he is going back into his father's country, to get the full wealth of his inheritance, with the tread of a conqueror and in a sort of triumphal procession. He would go to

sleep, then, have a good night's rest, and, tomorrow, he would go up into the land, like the general of affairs that he really was.

Poor Jacob! How God pitied him! And how, too, He loved him, in spite of all the vanity of his life and the littleness of his soul. And so it was that the Lord drew near, before ever he had had a chance to get his good night's rest, and wrestled with him till the ascending of the morning. And so it was, also, when Jacob went onward on the morrow, that he walked with a limp, with his head bowed and his heart in the dust. Nevertheless, his soul was greatly enlarged, and Jacob, the supplanter, had become Israel, for he was a prince and had power with God and men.

Dear reader, have *you* ever been at Penuel; has God ever wrestled with *you*; has He ever put *your* thigh out of joint, and do *you* walk with a limp?

15

PROSPERITY INDEED

"And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man."—Gen. 39:2.

THIS is an appealing word to you, my friend, is it not? This describes the sort of thing you, yourself, would like. To have the infinite God on your side and then, all your sky a rainbow, with a pot of gold on each end of it! Indeed, this is, is it not, just the kind of God you thought God was, and, especially, just the kind of God you wanted Him to be?

Well, this is the kind of God Joseph had—that is, when God wanted to be such; for He gave his servant many a good gift and, before He had done with him, set him on high and made him a veritable king. Only, this is not the kind of God He was all of the time. Indeed, when he preferred, He was of just an opposite sort. For instance, when the words of our text were written, Joseph was a slave, owned by Potiphar, held in Egypt, and made to do all sorts of menial tasks. In addition, just a little after this, Potiphar took him, put him in prison and left him there, where his feet were hurt with fetters and where he was laid in irons. In all those days, there was no rainbow in Joseph's sky; and as

for pots of gold, there were not even the pots, not to speak of the gold. Ah, this is the kind of God that we did *not* think God was, and especially, that we do *not* want Him to be. And yet through all, the same God was in the sky, and it never ceased to be true that He was with Joseph, and that Joseph was a prosperous man.

Now, there is no mystery about this, at all. For what it all means, is simply this: you and I have only seen and wanted half a God; and we have never dreamed what true prosperity is. So our prayer ought to be: "O God, open my eyes that I may see Thee as Thou art! and, O God, give me a brave heart that I may gladly take Thy chosen way, whatever this may mean!"

16

BIG ENOUGH TO FORGIVE

"As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good."—Gen. 50:20.

JOSEPH was a Mr. Great-heart. First, he could forgive and forget; and second, he could see above and beyond men's enmity the hand and love of God. A little man would have brooded over the supposed wrongs which God had done him; and, then, he would have given his brethren a taste of the treatment they had meted out to him. But Joseph had found Potiphar's house and even the prison and stocks, a "school of Egypt," only he had learned something better than the "wisdom of the Egyptians." Where other men, therefore, would have shrivelled up till their souls had rattled within them like dry peas in a drier pod, Joseph expanded more and more, getting more human and yet more divine day by day, till his vision was big, and his heart was warm and tender.

The same sun melts the wax and hardens the clay; and the same divine Providence makes out of men both sinners and saints. It all depends, not upon the sun and the Providence, but upon the wax, the clay, and the man. This is what the author of *Hebrews* meant when he said: "Now no

chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." To them which are "exercised thereby"; to them and only to them. To the others, chastening is a curse.

But to the man who submits, who tries to find out where he went wrong, who purposes to learn his lesson so fully as not to forget it, and who determines, by God's grace, never to repeat his sins and mistakes—to him God reveals Himself in large and wealthy meanings. After this, such an one does big things, simply because he has become big. So, like Joseph, he forgives, forgets, and sees God in everything; and thus, whether he be a slave or a king, he is the happiest person living, and the most useful to God and men.

17

WHEN GOD ASKS QUESTIONS

"The Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord?"—Exod. 4:11.

IT IS a trying experience for a man to have God begin to ask him questions. It is not so bad when He exhorts, or even when He reprimands, for then the man feels aggrieved and somewhat justified, and he harbors the thought, that he *might* say something in return. But when the questions come in thick and fast, then the hearer is bewildered, especially when he knows, full well, that no excusing reply can possibly be given. It was even so with Moses.

The trouble with Moses was that he had forgotten some primal truths: first, that God was sovereign, and had a right to create as it pleased Him; second, that He was personified Wisdom and knew exactly what gifts he wanted each one of His servants to have; third, that He was infinite in purpose, and, having varied plans to fulfil, desired men with different gifts, in order to bring all to pass in a perfect way; and lastly, that He was not only a creator, but also a re-creator, and so could

refashion, according to need, any man whom He had made and desired to use. If Moses had only remembered such facts as these, he would not have debated with God about his not being eloquent, but slow of speech and of a slow tongue. But he forgot; and so God had to bring him to the "Question Hour" and leave him at last without a word to say.

All this was bad enough, for Moses was an important person. But there is something a good deal worse; namely, that Moses' spirit has been abroad among men ever since. The men whom God has wanted to use but who simply would not be used because they felt the need of some gift they did not possess, are beyond numbering. The result is that God's work has been hindered, and even left undone, from Moses' time to this. If we are in this processional train, we had better drop out; it is poor company to keep, for it is grievous to God and men. Paul's words are the ones to go by: "Now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." Remembering this truth, one may be head or foot, without anxiety or care, and thus may serve in any capacity, with all joyfulness and with fruitful usefulness.

18

FORGETTING THE PAST

"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you."—Exod. 12:2.

THIS was addressed, in many cases, to men who had lived long, who were hoary with age, and who were nearing the end of their lives. In the nature of the case, therefore, their retrospect was longer than their prospect. How then could God say, in effect: "Your past is as nothing; it is your future that counts?" The answer is plain.

Redemption changes things. First, it obliterates the past; second, it starts life over again; and third, it makes life so new in quality, that the days which have been, as compared with those which are to be, are as nothing at all.

Life, then, really begins, not with the first birth, but with the second. In some cases, the years may run concurrent, and a person may be, say, twenty-one years of age, both in the flesh and in the Spirit. But in other cases, a man may be eighty years of age in the flesh, but only one year old in the Spirit. The redeemed greybeards in the missions, therefore, are not wrong when they get up and say: "I

am just three years old, to-night." As God reckons time, this is exactly what they are.

This is what Christ implied when he said to Nicodemus: "Ye must be born again." And this is what Paul meant when he declared: "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature," or, literally, a new creation. In other words, becoming a Christian is a radical event; it is the creating and implanting of a new life, the starting out into a new experience, the development into a new condition, the being turned toward a new sphere and destiny. And mark this, it ought to mean, experimentally, the bearing all through of a new character.

How good God was to Israel to give them a new start! How infinitely good He has been to us, to make, actually, *all* things new!

19

GOD'S WAY OF SALVATION

"When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you."—Exod. 12:13.

THERE are many theories of salvation which men have lived and died by. The popular one has been that of balancing good over against evil; that is, the being conscious of many sins, and the trying to tip the scale by as many good deeds as there were sins; as if God, in such a case, were not going to demand that there be none evil and all good! Then there has been the little less popular procedure of endeavouring to placate God by the making of gifts of money, the building of shrines and temples, the going on long pilgrimages, the lying upon a bed of spikes, the hanging by a hook from a pole, the offering of headless chickens, the burning of incense and oxen; and finally, in recent days, of going "over the top" for king, for president or for country; as if God could accept of sinful offerings in atonement for an offerer's sins!

Lastly, there has been the more respectable and refined method, of salvation by character, which is this: being born in a Christian country, imbibing, in family, school, college, and church, Chris-

tian principles, living and working in a Christian environment, becoming buttressed about and propped up by Christian influences, taking into mind and spirit Christian standards and ideals, and then, forgetting the source of all these blessings, saying to God and men, "This is the character which *I* have built," and finally, choosing to deny Christ, the Author of all, and to affirm that this supposed self-made life will bear the test of time and eternity, including the judgment to come; as if God were to be deceived by such soul-trickery and hypocrisy as this!

The word is an old one, but it is ever new in its truth; it is a new one, but it is ever old in its testimony: "When I see the BLOOD, *I will pass over you*"; "Without shedding of BLOOD is no remission"; "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious BLOOD of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." The end of the lesson, then, is that a man must be saved in God's way, and, hence, that each one of us is to get, and *keep,* under the BLOOD.

20

A NIGHT OF WATCHINGS

"It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord."—Exod. 12:42.

THERE are times which ought never to be forgotten. We may be puritans and may have decided objection, aside from the Lord's Day, to church calendars and to set days of worship. But even then, it will be well for our souls if we make note of certain seasons and keep them in constant remembrance. For there are days which mean much to God, and which, for this reason, ought to mean much to us.

For instance, that was a wonderful day when we were converted, for in that hour there was joy in the presence of the angels, that is, in the very heart of God. Let us never forget it, then, and as often as the day comes around let us steal away and give God thanks for His redemptive mercy toward us. Then, those were wonderful days when we openly confessed our faith in Christ, when we were consecrated to God, when we began to work for Him, when we first led a soul to Him, when— But there are too many such times in the godly life to enumerate them. So let us make a mental calendar of God's blessings and keep it sacredly. That is what

God told Israel to do, saying: "It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord"; or, literally, "a night of watchings." In other words, God asks us to keep awake to such seasons; for it will be thus that we shall keep praising Him.

One has said: "The perseverance of the saints consists in the unlimited capacity of beginning over again." Keeping memorial days will help us to do this; for a sacred remembrance of the past will give us a likewise sacred appreciation of the present, with the desire to make the present like the past, only ever newer, better, and greater.

21

THE GOD OF THE CLOUD

"The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night."—Exod. 13:21.

IT WAS a wonderful thing for a people who had gone forth into a vast wilderness, the wastes of which were as trackless as those of the sea, to have a pillar of cloud to guide them day by day. And it was even a more wonderful thing, when, in that same wilderness, sight had wholly failed by reason of darkness, to have a pillar of fire to lead them night by night.

How safe Israel must have felt under the cloud's protection; how sure they must have felt under its guidance! So long as it was there, they did not need to fear sun, moon, or enemies; and so long as it went before them, though they might be called upon to be occupied with many tasks, they did not need for a moment, to bear any anxiety about the way or its ultimate end. The cloud was the sign and promise that Jehovah was with them, and they knew that He was their sufficiency.

We are tempted to envy those Israelites of old, in spite of their wilderness-walk. It must have been

so comforting actually to *see* the cloud, to have it, as it were, a tangible thing in their midst, so that all doubting could be put away. In other words, we prefer the walk of sight to that of faith; for the things visible and touchable more easily displace our fears and establish our confidence. How infinitely sad! As if the temporal were more certain than the eternal, the things which can be shaken more sure than those which cannot. The cloud has vanished away. What then is left? That which, after all, made the cloud what it was, namely, the God of the cloud. Having Him, then, we need nothing besides.

For thus spoke Jesus: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

22

GOD FOR THE HELPLESS

"Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you today; . . . the Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."—Exod. 14:13, 14.

God never puts a premium upon inaction. The teaching of the Old Testament in respect to Israel makes this plain, and the teaching of the New Testament in respect to the Church, amply confirms the thought. In language unmistakable, we are told that we are to fight the good fight of faith, and the rewards are only promised to those who overcome.

At the same time, there is a place for inaction, and it is imposed upon us by exhortation and commandment. For instance, our spirits are to know no turbulent anxiety and we are never to wage warfare in the energy of the flesh. Always, so far as the quietness of trust is concerned, we are to be still, and know that God is God. In these respects, the man of God is to experience in his heart as great a calm as was on the lake of Gennesaret, when Christ said, "Peace, be still."

But these are not the suggestions of our text. Here we have the teaching of inaction from a dif-

ferent standpoint. Israel was in a strait place. Destruction was behind them, because of the Egyptians, and it was before them, because of the Red Sea; and there was escape neither to the left nor to the right. In fact, so far as anything they could do, they were as good as dead. There was, then, no value in effort of any kind. The only thing they could do, was to give in and give up. And God told them to do this; to surrender absolutely and to stand still. It was just then, however, that He revealed Himself as the God of Deliverance. What was impossible for Israel was easy for God. He could go backward or forward. As a matter of fact, He chose, as He usually does, to go forward. And He took Israel along with Him, giving them victory over all their obstacles and enemies.

It is a great thing to be brought, from time to time, into a place of utter helplessness. It is at such times, as never otherwise, that we learn the infinite resources and power of God.

23

FORWARD!

"Go forward."—Exod. 14:15.

NAPOLEON used to speak of Marshal Blücher as "Old Forwards." Once he routed him and Blücher fled, when Napoleon, in high glee, nicknamed him, "Marshal Backwards." But shortly after this, Blücher returned to the fray, coming up late when he was not expected, and striking triumphantly Napoleon's troops on the flank. And "Old Forwards," hatless, coatless, muddy and bloody, had his revenge. He was a man who did not know when he was beaten; and when he retired from his enemies, it was only to make new preparations to press forward against them.

This is exactly what is needed in Christian enterprises. The kind of soldiers who are wanted for Christ's holy war, are those who do not know what defeat means; who may for a moment retire, but who will never for a moment give up; and who will only go back in order to prepare to go farther forward. Livingstone might well have been called, "Old Forwards"; and Hudson Taylor and others. They were Christian heroes who always belonged to God's "advance guard."

Blücher was the deciding factor at the battle of

Waterloo. "Old Forwards" was late, having met with many hindrances; but he finally got upon the field and he gave Napoleon his *coup de grace.* If we press on, who knows but that we also shall be permitted to give the last sword-thrust, in some battle of the Lord?

24

HEALING THAT IS DIVINE

"I am the Lord that healeth thee."—Exod. 15:26.

THIS text is the Old Testament message for an earthly people, whose blessings were largely, though not exclusively, in the physical realm. The New Testament message for the heavenly man, Paul, where blessing was largely, though not exclusively, in the spiritual realm, was this: "My grace is sufficient for thee." And it is the same Lord in each case, with the same love and the same power.

But even in the Old Testament Jewish cases, while the Lord healed, the healing was not always apart from means. It was a Jew who told Naaman to go wash seven times in the Jordan, that he might be healed of his leprosy. It was the holy Jew, Isaiah, who instructed that a poultice of figs should be made for the Jewish king, Hezekiah, in order that he might be healed, and it was after the king had been so healed, that he sang his inspired song of praise unto the Lord. It was the Lord of the Jews, when the Jewish prophet, Elijah, was sick and faint, who first put him to sleep under the juniper tree, and then came to him, put a cake baken on the coals and a cruse of water at his head,

and bade him arise and eat. And for such few exceptions in the Old Testament economy, there are many in the New.

In other words, first, God is always sovereign as to whether He will, or will not heal; and second, He is, likewise, always sovereign in His method of healing. As to the last—from a New Testament standpoint—He has three ways of healing; mediately, by the physician and his remedy; naturally, by rest or change of scene; and miraculously, apart from all means. But mark this: whether it is in one way or another, it is all divine healing. Satan does not heal, nor does the doctor, nor does the medicine. It is the Lord who heals, and He alone.

The thing, then, for a Christian who is sick to do, is to make Christ the Lord of his life; to put the body wholly at His disposal; to ask Him to glorify Himself in what He does; to trust Him utterly with the issue; to take the way of his guidance as to healing, and, then, to leave all praisefully with Him.

25

GOD GRACIOUSLY HEARS

"It shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious."—Exod. 22:27.

HERE is both the analysis and philosophy of prayer. First, the needy saint is to cry; second, when he cries, God will hear; and third, the reason that God hears is, that He is gracious. Let us consider these three statements separately:

First: The needy saint is to cry. Prayer is natural, because a soul in need must necessarily appeal for help to the Highest One. Prayer is supernatural, because it is the office work of the indwelling Holy Spirit, to lift the spirit into communion with the Holy One. From both standpoints, therefore, in one measure or another, the Christian will pray.

Second: When the saint prays, God will hear. God is a Father, with all the attributes included in that word. Hence, He is, among other things, compassionate, ready to help, glad to enrich with blessings, and anxious to develop the spiritual life. His prerogative, therefore, is to show mercy of every kind, and it would be harder for Him not to answer prayer, than to do so. It follows, when He

hears the cry of one who is His own, that He leaps to that one's aid, more quickly than a mother does to that of her offspring. So, then, we should never be surprised when the Lord hears us. Our surprise should be—if such ever takes place—when He does not do so.

Third: The reason that God hears us is, that He is gracious. In spite of our instinct to pray, and God's instinct to give, no answer to prayer would ever be obtained, except for that unmerited favor which the Father has bestowed upon us in Christ. The simple reason of this is, that we should be unworthy to ask for blessing, and God would be hindered from giving it, were it not for reconciliation and the putting away of sin. It is only as we are redeemed, that the middle wall of partition between God and ourselves is broken down, and hindrances to worship are removed. This, for the child of God, grace has done. It is grace, then, that opens the way to the Father's throne and heart.

26

AN ANGEL PROVIDER

"Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared."—Exod. 23:20.

IT IS altogether sad, that God, in giving such a promise as this, should have to begin with the word, "Behold." The truth of the matter is, men are so slow to understand His loving ways with them, that they expect meagre and disconsolate things in their experiences with Deity, and are not looking out for things of an opposite kind. The result is, that God has to arrest their attention, and assure them in doing so, that He will surprise them, with the largess of His blessing.

The promise God made to Israel, was one that was all inclusive. He said nothing about the details of food, water, raiment, resting-places, vanquishing enemies, and all the hundred and one other items, which Moses and his followers would be concerned about. As a matter of fact, these were really trifles with God, so easy was it for Him to provide for them all. But besides this, He had a better way of guaranteeing these things, than to promise the things themselves. In other words, as

He is so fond of doing, He went to the heart of the matter, and promised Israel, not the provisions, but the Provider: "I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way."

About the year 1885, Major Whittle, that sainted evangelist of the past generation, wrote me from Northfield a short letter. There was nothing remarkable about the note. But at the bottom was written this: "Philippians 4:19." I looked up the text, in a casual frame of mind. But the Holy Spirit shot its words into my heart like a shaft of light from the noonday sun: "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." For over thirty years, now, I have been living upon those words, in things temporal and spiritual, and they have never yet failed me. And the explanation is simply this: "My God." God's person and presence, in short, are ever the certain pledge of all His gifts. Thus it was, therefore, that He said to Israel: "An Angel." After this, Israel might expect anything and everything, within the will of God. And, reader, so may you.

27

IN TOUCH WITH GOD

"Whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy."—Exod. 29:37.

IT IS generally true, in the divine economy, that the value of a thing in God's sight is not what it is, in itself, but what it is in its relationship. Gold, in a heathen temple, was an abomination to God; but brass, in His own temple, was infinitely precious to Him. A king of a heathen tribe had no standing before Him and met with rejection and judgment; but a pauper in Israel was as "the apple of His eye," and was forever accepted before Him. A learned, even a good man among the Gentile nations, was despised in His sight; but a man in Israel, ignorant and crooked as Jacob, was loved for the fathers' sake, and was one of the beloved of the Lord who dwelt in safety by Him. This, to the natural man, is a great mystery. Nevertheless, before God, it is an eternal fact.

But we are not left altogether without understanding of the meaning of all this. It is explained by the teaching, which the New Testament makes specially plain, that salvation and sanctification are not of works but of grace. In salvation, it is not our worth before God, but Christ's which is in

mind, and hence the question of questions is, what is our relationship to Him; and in sanctification it is the same. As to the one, Paul said, as it is in the Revised Version: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me"; and as to the other, he said: "That life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

This Old Testament text, therefore, is but the prefigurement of the New Testament conditions. In the old economy, the centre of all the Tabernacle worship was the altar, since upon it was laid the redeeming and sanctifying sacrifice. Everything else in the Tabernacle was founded upon it, was gathered around it and looked toward it. What touched it, therefore, became like to it; that is, it was accepted by God, and separated unto Him and His service. It thus became "holy," which did not mean a change of quality, but rather, a change of relationship and use.

To keep "in touch" with Christ, is to save both ourselves and our service, for time and eternity.

28

BUT NOT WITHOUT GOD

"My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence."—Exod. 33:14, 15.

A LONG and hard journey was before Moses and his people, in which their souls would be greatly tried. Desert sands were to be traversed, long marches were to be taken, a tropical sun was to be endured, mighty enemies were to be overcome and, above all, there was to be the mystery of a wandering to and fro, which would seem to be without reason or purpose. No wonder Moses was awed by the prospect, on his own account and that of his people. How he, and they, would endure and survive, he did not know.

As Moses faced what was before him, he must have thought of many possible solutions to his problem. This leader of Israel was a naturally resourceful man, and, as we are told, was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." He would consider, therefore, ways and means in a practical manner and would not be without ideas as to how these might be helpfully and even successfully applied. And yet evidently, after all his thinking, he

concluded that the task was too great for mortal man. And he was quite right. This was an undertaking so utterly beyond man that it demanded no one less than God Himself. Hence, finally, God's assuring word; hence, also, Moses' quick and pleading answer.

Just three thousand three hundred and sixty-five years after the above episode, a little Englishman, Hudson Taylor, was facing the task of evangelizing the inland, unreached, and million-peopled provinces of China. The problem was so vast and overwhelming that he shrank from it unutterably. But he finally cast himself upon God, saying that he would go if the divine Presence would go with him. And so he went—with God. And God, the Almighty, bore his burdens, supplied his need, turned the one into a thousand, opened up the whole of eleven great provinces and, in a generation saved a multitude of souls. In short, the God of Moses was the God of Hudson Taylor, and manifestly, three thousand years had not in the least changed His character, nor diminished His power.

Do you, O man of God, stand before some trackless waste of desert, and is the task too great for you? Look it all full in the face—and then forget it. But oh, do not ever, ever forget the Presence! Whatever your situation, *God* is your salvation!

29

A JEALOUS GOD

"Thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."—Exod. 34:14.

EMMA HART was born in 1765, at Ness, in Cheshire, and while she was yet in her teens, became the mistress of the Honourable Charles Greville. Through a dastardly desertion on the part of her lover and protector, she suddenly had her eyes opened to the folly and evil of her life, and thereafter she reclaimed, as far as she could, the purity of her womanhood and the rectitude of her thought and action.

For five years after this, she lived at Naples, in intimate relationship with the court there, being the *confidante* of the queen. Here she ripened into an excelling beauty and a compelling intellect, and, by her warm sympathies, her broad-mindedness, and irreproachable conduct won the admiration and love of high and low alike. The uncle of Greville, Sir William Hamilton, who was England's ambassador at Naples, fell in love with Emma, and though he was well acquainted with her past, offered her his hand in marriage. The union was consummated in London, and Sir William thus be-

stowed upon a poor and almost outcast woman, his name, his home, his title, his official honours, and the opportunities of life and power which were his.

Lady Hamilton was grateful for all this, and she responded to the trust put upon her in an admirable and almost unprecedented manner. Meanwhile, her beauty grew apace, and it was only exceeded by her constant development in mind and heart. Then suddenly a dark shadow fell across her life. Lord Nelson, wearing the glory of his recent victories over the French fleet, and full of charm and enticement, sought her companionship and finally her love. And poor Lady Hamilton fell before the tempter. In 1801 she gave birth to a daughter, Horatia, whose father was not Hamilton, but Nelson.

I have gone over this story but for one reason; in order to ask, what would *you* have felt if you had been Sir William Hamilton, the husband, friend, and benefactor of the adulterous Emma? Would you have taken betrayal of your love and trust without a heart pang, with no regret for the wrong done, and with an immediate and indifferent forgiveness and forgetfulness of the past? Or, would your name have been suddenly turned into Jealous, your heart suddenly set on fire with shame, and your tongue suddenly made like a two-edged sword in denouncement of your loved one's deep-dyed sin and cruel disloyalty? Try to put yourself, sympathetically and completely in Sir Will-

iam's position, and then imagine what your feelings would have been.

When you have done this, remember, by as much as God is so much holier, purer, more loving, and more sensitive than you, that your deepest sorrow would be highest joy, as compared with the anguish which His heart feels when one whom He has made His own and whom He has loved and cared for, turns from Him to worship and serve some other god.

30

THE GLORY OF THE FACE

"Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him."—Exod. 34: 29.

MOSES had had a great experience. He had spent forty days and nights on the mount, alone with God, and he had been so occupied with Him that he had neither eaten bread nor drunk water for the whole of that time. The God whom he had seen had been the Angel of the covenant,—that is, Jesus in angelic form; and with entire freedom he had looked upon His face for all the long days and nights he had spent in his blessed presence. Gazing at glory, therefore, had been a real experience with him, for he had seen—as Paul put it long afterwards—the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And the result was that he had been changed—as again Paul put it—into the same image, as from glory to glory.

When, therefore, Moses came down from the mount, his face shone with the light of another world, and above all, with the light of another Person. And the best part of the experience was, that he never knew it. The children of Israel quickly found it out, however, and their lower-level eyes

were blinded by the sight. But the man of God who had been on the mount, came down to the plain as ignorant of his transfiguration as if he had never had any "experience" at all. And if you had met him that day and heard him speak, I am well-nigh sure that you would have found that his talk would have been, not at all, about himself and his attainment, but only and wholly about the Jehovah upon whom he had looked.

Rev. William Pennefather, the founder of the Mildmay Mission in London, was once passing over the street when he was accosted by a crossing-sweep, begging for alms. Looking into Mr. Pennefather's face, the sweep almost forgot his need and suddenly exclaimed: "O man of God, with the look of heaven in your face!" A Bible teacher was paying a visit to China and came to an inland station there. He remained in the place parts of three days, and then went on his way, never to return. That was many years ago, but to this day in that station he is always spoken of as, "Mr. Heavenly-face." A missionary left all and followed his Lord to China, where he laboured in much obscurity for many years, dwelling in the interior and giving himself to the Chinese with rare love and devotion. He had, at last, to leave his work, but far and wide in China, he is lovingly remembered, and the natives speak tenderly of him as, "Mr. Glory-face."

We may not follow Moses to the mount. But we may follow Christ upon the plain. And even on

these lower levels, the light of that Person will be our glory, provided we keep our eyes on His face, forget ourselves, and think and speak only and wholly of Him.

31

FROM A WILLING HEART

"Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord; gold, and silver, and brass."—Exod. 35:5.

IT IS evident from such a verse as this, that the worth of a gift in God's sight is not in its intrinsic value, but in its expression of love. This is so in the nature of the case, in view of two great facts: first, God already owns everything in the universe, and there is no possibility of any one enriching Him; and, second, God is love, and love values love more highly than anything else.

Some radical conclusions are derived from the foregoing, which are corrective of much of our thinking and acting in respect to giving to God. For one thing, one is only asked to give according to his ability. The rich man may give his gold; the man of average wealth may give his silver; and the poor man may give his brass; and in these cases, the poor man's offering of brass may be to God as precious, even more precious, than the rich man's offering of gold, the test being not in the thing given, but in its value as related to the indi-

vidual's other possessions, and, in what it represents of heart attachment and devotion.

For another thing: every one may give at least something. It was a privilege for the rich man to give his gold and the man of average wealth his silver; but neither the one nor the other of these men excluded the man who could give no more than his brass. Each person had his opportunity to give as God had prospered him, and the single divine criterion was, that each should give what he could and each with a "willing heart."

One time, in his earlier missionary life, Hudson Taylor was preparing to go from England to China. At the time spoken of, he was busy attending to the last things of his preparation and, hence, was preoccupied. But his little daughter had no fear of interrupting him, and came boldly into his study and to his desk. Mr. Taylor's attention was called to the child by hearing her say: "See, father, I have brought you a present." The father took the proffered gift and examined it carefully, but wholly failed to make out what it was. There was a short, flat piece of wood, and stuck up in the middle of it was a much smaller piece of wood. The father did not want to grieve his child, and so he spoke as tenderly as possible. "Thank you, darling," he said, "how pretty it is!" And then he added very gently: "May I ask you what this may be?" The little girl was evidently surprised at her father's

denseness, and answered: "Why, it's a ship to carry you to China."

Mr. Taylor was greatly touched, for his little girl had done what she could to help him upon his way, and this was her heart-offering. And what do you suppose he did with the piece of wood? Do you think he waited until his daughter had gone and then threw it into the waste basket? Ah, he was a father and had a father's heart! He handled the tiny "ship" very carefully, and then put it away for safe keeping in his bureau drawer; and for many years after that, whenever he returned from China to England, he would go to the drawer, take out his treasure, look at it tenderly, and then lovingly praise God, anew, for the little girl who gave him her wood-offering, and with it, her very heart.

32

AS COMMANDED

"Thus did Moses: according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he."—Exod. 40:16.

IT IS a great thing to have a command from God. It makes everything distinct and clear. To have Him put things simply and then forcefully, not only leaves a man without excuse, but nerves him to determinate action.

And yet God has spoken in commandment to many a man, without its having the divinely desired effect. Some men insist upon seeing gray even when the divine Hand colors a thing distinctly white or black. And other men act black, even when they see white. The Germans have a suggestive saying: *"Strasse engel, haus teufel,"* which means "Street angel, house devil"; that is, there are those who profess to see clearly, and act doubly.

Now, Moses was not a man after this sort. He listened to the Word of God, sought out its meaning to the full, and then kept it to the last detail. Seven times over, in the chapter from which our text is taken, the phrase occurs, "As the Lord commanded Moses," and at the beginning and ending of the section between verses 16 and 33, it is em-

phatically declared that Moses did just what he had been told to do—nothing less nor more. He made the tent and the altar, the table of shewbread and the candlestick, the coverings and the tent pins; in other words, he made the big things and the little, the consequential and the inconsequential, and each thing exactly after the pattern which had been showed to him in the mount.

And have you ever noticed what happened after Moses had thus finished his work? Verse 34 tells us: "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." After all, it is the life of obedience which counts. God is not so much concerned about what we have *felt*; He wants to know what we have *done*. So it is, just in proportion as we, too, have finished our work, that the Spirit of glory takes possession of us: "The Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that *obey* Him."

33

HOLINESS

"For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."—Lev. 11:44.

HOLINESS is the object and end of redemption. As all things in God's providential economy move toward the manifestation of His own holiness, so all His sacrificial work for us, moves toward the making of ourselves into His likeness, which is our holiness. For holiness has to do with being and character. It is what God is in Himself; and it is what we are through Christ in Him. Practically, for us, it is sanctification; that is, it is being set apart by the Spirit unto God, for his possession and use. And it is this, experimentally realized, which transforms us into the divine image; that is, into holiness.

Keeping these thoughts in mind, we better understand what otherwise seems strange; namely, the connection between the first part of the text and the last. The first part exhorts to holiness and the second forbids the defiling of one's self with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon

the earth. But the question arises, Why do we need such a prohibition as this? Does not nature itself teach us that there is an essential difference between a man and a beast, and that this must ever be maintained? And, besides, why is it that holiness is so calculated to establish the distinction desired?

But these questions if honestly asked, reveal a woeful ignorance, both of human nature, and of human history. To go back into the secret records, say of Sodom or Pompeii or London, or New York, is to find revelations of gross sin which would not be believed were they not known. And, also, where the body of a man may remain pure, the spirit may often be defiled in the most bestial ways. So, then, nothing less than divine holiness is able to lift us up above the plane of creeping things. The trail of the Reptile has been left across our flesh and spirits, and we shall follow it hard, unless we are fashioned by the Spirit of holiness into newness of life.

I came across a man, many years ago, in Bleecker Street Mission, New York, who was not only living on the plane of creeping things, but was so low down that he, himself, was literally, a creeping thing. He was filthy in body, still more filthy in mind, and even still more filthy in spirit, his whole being having been given over to the bestial. Moreover, he was filled with liquor and on the verge of delirium tremens. In our short conversa-

tion I told him that Jesus Christ was able then and there to make him whole, giving him the words: "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." He knelt with me, trembling from head to foot, and in a few halting sentences told Christ that he was lost and wanted to be saved, and that he would accept the "gift."

That man got up absolutely sober, with the light of heaven in his eyes; and seeing another wreck of humanity near him, he went over to him, sat down by his side, put his arm about his shoulder, and began to tell him of the Saviour who had just then made a new man out of him. This is how God lifted a sinner above creeping things. And poor, weary, tempted, and discouraged saint, what He did for that man He is able just now to do for you—only much more!

34

EVERY COMMANDMENT

"Therefore shall ye observe all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: I am the Lord."—Lev. 19:37.

IT IS one of the curiously sad features of our fallen nature, in spite of our salvation and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, that we differentiate between the various commandments of God, picking and choosing among them, as if one differed in importance from another. Any Christian who tests himself in this matter will discover the fact, that he does not hold all of the divinely given commandments in equal regard. One will love God, but he will forget to love his neighbor. Another will be great on truth, but will fail in compassion. Another will provide things honest in the sight of all men, but will not give with cheerfulness. Another will feed every tramp that comes to the back door, but will leave the heathen to perish. At best, most of us are only unevenly-baked saints, being overdone, on one side, and underdone on the other.

It is evident from our text that God has no such thought as the above in mind. He says that we are to observe "all" His statutes and "all" His judg-

ments and to "do them." His conception of the Christian life is one of full development and symmetry. And the way He has devised to bring such a result to pass is by giving us words of exhortation in respect to all of the many sides of life and service. To keep all the words of the Lord, therefore, is to grow up into the full stature of Christ; not to keep them, or to keep only a part of them, is to stunt our growth and to develop one part at the expense of another. The ex-Kaiser of Germany was born with his left arm out of joint at the shoulder, and the physicians did not discover the malformation until too late to rectify it. As a result, the Emperor grew up with a withered arm, which all of his one hundred and sixty-seven glittering uniforms have never been able either to make useful or hide. Alas, there is many a withered arm and leg and hand and foot, in the membership of the body of Christ! And, manifestly, it all results from the habit which the saints have of saying, this is necessary, but not that; I will do this, but not that!

A beautiful story is told of Charles T. Studd, the Cambridge University cricketer, who, later, went as a missionary to China, and is now in the heart of Africa. His friend, Stanley Smith, returning to Studd's home at midnight, saw a light under his door, and bursting into his room, found him there sitting up in his bed, his cricket jacket over his shoulders, his candle burning beside him, and his

Bible open before him. Smith was surprised and exclaimed: "Why, Charlie, whatever are you doing?" And Studd answered: "Well, Stanley, it was like this: I could not sleep, and as I lay here awake, I was trying to remember all of the commandments which Jesus gave us to keep; I could remember some, but not all; and so I was just searching out the rest of them." Do you wonder that such a man grew in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, that he gave up his cricket and all that England held for him, and that, obedient to Christ's command to "Go," went forth to the heathen?

"Whosoever therefore," said Jesus, "shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven."

35

FREE

"I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright."—Lev. 26:13.

MAN, at his best, as a result of sin, is but a servile creature. Just as the Roman emperors used to go out into foreign parts, make a nation pass under the yoke, and so turn that nation from the position of freedom into that of slavery, so Satan has come into men's lives, established his dominion over them, and made them slaves of the most abject kind. And yet there is the possibility of deliverance. For just as the Roman emperor might break the yoke of a slave, in given instances, and make a man a free citizen of Rome, so God may lift us up and out of Satan's power and bring us into His great and glorious freedom, where a man is free indeed. And just this is the present purpose of God's redemptive work.

We are by nature, as Paul says, "sold under sin," having, as it were, been put on the block at public auction and having been bid in by Satan, the first and then highest bidder. But a second and even higher Bidder came by, one day, and bought us back to freedom at tremendous cost; and now it is for us to be what we are, namely, Christ's free-

men, and hence to walk in newness of life. The text reminds us that on one of his walks long ago, Jehovah passed by the brickyards of Egypt and found there millions of toiling, sweating, suffering slaves; and by His outstretched arm he set them free for evermore, making them a nation of kings. And other texts tell us, that He came by a green hill outside of Jerusalem one other day, with the vision of a servile world before Him, and there He paid the price of our redemption, blotting out the handwriting that was against us, nailing it to His Cross, and making it possible for His apostle to say: "Sin shall not have dominion over you"! So then we are free, once and for ever free.

Not long after the Civil War, a Northern officer had occasion to go into one of the Southern states. As he rode along on horseback through a belt of woods, he came across an old colored man, bent as a result of toil, carrying a hoe over his shoulder, and taking his slow and painful way out to the cotton field. The officer looked with compassion upon the man, and wishing to bring joy into the burdened heart, said: "Good morning, Sambo; do you know that you are free?" The old slave bowed and said: "Good morning, massa," and then passed on. The officer, thinking the man had not heard, said again: "Sambo, you are no longer a slave; Abraham Lincoln has set you free."

The old slave paused, turned back and came close to the horse. Looking up into the officer's

face he said: "Massa, d'you mean I'se free?" The Northerner told him that the war was over, that the North had won, and that he was indeed free. A new look came into the old man's eyes, and he straightened himself up as well as he could. Then placing himself in the middle of the road, he said: "Let's give three cheers for Abra'm Lincoln!" At this the one-time slave took off his hat and swung it round his head, while he and the officer joined in cheering for "Father Abraham." He went to his work, then, with a new carriage and hope; and "Father Abraham" saw to it that he never again became a slave.

My brother, the best thing you can do, wherever and however you are, is to straighten yourself, take off your hat, and then—I speak very reverently—give three cheers for Jesus Christ; for—let me say it again—He has made you once and forever—FREE.

36

AT WAR ON GOD'S SIDE

"And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies."—Num. 10:9.

THE life which Israel was called upon to live in Canaan, was not one of ease, but of toil; not one of peace, but of warfare. The children of Israel had to work, and often, in the midst of their work, they had to fight. If they had wanted to design a coat of arms which would fitly represent their national and individual position, they could not have done better than to choose a laurel wreath, and, inside of it, a man with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other. It is always so in God's economy. What we gain, we get by labour; what we retain, we hold by warfare.

But there was a peculiar thing about Israel's periods of fighting. Most armies go into battle as secretly and as silently as possible. Israel went to war openly, and with as much noise as possible. At the very moment of advance they were to display themselves before their enemies, and then to blow

their trumpets with all their might. Nor was the end in view to produce a dramatic and psychological effect. They were, at times of battle, too serious for drama; and they were, at all times, too spiritual for psychology. In their actions, they were under divine command; and in every movement they had a divine purpose. As for display, why should they hide themselves when God was on their side? And as for blowing alarms with their trumpets, why should they not call the people to fight and God to their leadership, when they were the hosts of Jehovah and their battles were for Him? And so it came to pass, again and again, just as had been promised, that they were remembered before the Lord their God, and were saved from their enemies.

It is a great thing to fight. It is a greater thing to fight for God. But the greatest thing of all is to fight *with* God. Abraham Lincoln, at a time of great crisis of the Civil War, put it correctly. When a statesman said to him, "I hope God is on our side," he replied, "That does not concern me; but I am profoundly anxious to make sure that we are on God's side." In such circumstances, you can go on to the field in full display and blow your trumpets in complete abandonment, for, being with God, He will be with you, and will fight for you. And when *God* fights He *wins!*

37

REFRESHMENT IN THE DESERT

"And they departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey: and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them."—Num. 10:33.

ISRAEL, no doubt, preferred to stay by the mount. And there was good reason why they should. The mount was out of Egypt, and was the sign of deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The mount had brought them rest, for after their toilsome journeys they had encamped many days at its base. The mount was like the "shadow of a great rock in a weary land," for, even in noontide heat, cooling shades could always be found there. The mount was a place of revelation, for God had there given the law. The mount brought opportunity of communion, where the people could speak with God and could hear Him speak with them. The mount was a place of glory, where God came down in His majesty, and where there were lightnings, thunderings, quakings, and dazzling effulgence. Yes, there was good reason to stay at the mount; and, no doubt, Israel would have chosen to remain just where they were.

But God had other plans for His people. He saw Canaan, with its rushing streams, meadowed plains, fragrant vineyards and big grapes, on ahead, and He wanted to take them out, that He might bring them in. So the mount would have to be given up. However good it was, the lesser must be forsaken if the greater was to be obtained. And thus it came to pass, one day, that the ark of the covenant of the Lord—which Israel was bound to follow—set forward leading them from cooling shades into heated and wilderness places. It was hard. But it was also necessary—provided they were to have God's best.

And then a wonderful thing happened. The ark did not keep going, steadily, unendingly. It went for a three-days' journey, and then stopped. Then another wonderful thing happened. When the ark stopped, the following multitude found, manifestly, that it had had eyes in the desert, that even in waste places it had been able to seek out and discover a "resting-place" for them. In other words, Israel came to know that forward, the Lord would go; toward Canaan, He would lead; into the desert, He would advance; but also, that He would not go too far at any one time; He would prove that He knew their frame, and remembered that they were dust; and that, always, however strenuous the way might be, a time and place of refreshment would be revealed to, and secured for them.

How like this is to our own experience! We

have our mounts, where we would fain stay. But God insists upon leading us to some better country which he has prepared for us. He takes the wilderness-way and insists upon the wilderness path. We think it hard, and are tempted to think Him hard. But we soon find that He is dealing most tenderly with us. And, at last, the mount is forgotten, in the fair prospect of Canaan's ampler and richer joys.

Don't shrink. Trust, and follow on. For be assured that the ark of the covenant goes before *you,* to search out a resting place, *even for you.*

38

THE DANGEROUS GODLY MAN

"With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold; wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"—Num. 12:8.

IT IS a solemn thing for any of us to speak against a true man of God, whether he be in the pulpit or pew. Such a one has a sure means of defense and offense, and the last may be terrible in its consequences. He does not have to turn and strike you in the face. Nor does he have to hale you before a civil or ecclesiastical court. All he has to do is to appeal to God, to the One who speaks with him "mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches."

The godly man, therefore, who is quiet and silent at a time of provocation, is a dangerous person to deal with; and the godly man who is yielding under such circumstances, is the most dangerous one of all. For a man of this sort only *appears* to be quiet and silent and yielding. As a matter of fact, he is just the opposite. He says nothing to you, but he says a great deal to God. And the consequence is that God, sooner or later, takes his part.

And when God gets after a man, in answer to such an one's prayers, he had better look out. In fact, according to this Scripture and others like it (2 Peter 2:10; Jude 8; James 4:11; 1 Thess. 5:12, 13; Heb. 13:7, 17), a good thing to do, when one is tempted to fight a servant of the Most High God, is, from the beginning, not to begin.

A sea captain in China once found the above to be true in respect to Hudson Taylor, although, in this particular case, the ending was a happy one for all concerned. This captain was piloting his steamer from Shanghai to Ningpo, and Taylor was a passenger on board. One day the captain got talking with the latter, not knowing who he was, and he took the opportunity to ventilate his wrath against all missionaries in general and Taylor in particular.

After he had finished his tirade, the missionary quietly said, "I am Mr. Taylor." The irate captain looked down on the meek little man, turned on his heel and disappeared. He had given Mr. Taylor to understand that he would, if he ever caught him, drown him in the depths of the sea. But this part of the program did not come off. Instead, the bluff old seadog, after arriving in port, sent the missionary, with his compliments, a box containing several bottles of champagne. Hudson Taylor smiled when he saw the contents of the package, not knowing what to do with the wine. But there was no occasion for God to smile, for he

had immediately turned the captain's wrath into a blessing.

Mrs. Taylor, soon afterwards, fell seriously sick, and for a long time was hovering between life and death; and in that far-away heathen city of Ningpo, the captain's wine was the only thing which maintained her strength, and eventually, saved her from death.

There is indeed One who takes the part of the godly saint. So treat such an one well, my brother, if you want God to treat you well.

39

MR. BRAVEHEART

"And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it."—Num. 13:30.

If Moses was a Mr. Greatheart, Caleb was a Mr. Braveheart. His name meant, "a dog." But if he was this, he was no cur; rather, he was one of those noble mastiffs, which never pick a fight and always avoid one if they can, but which fight like mad and to win if they ever do get at it. Such dogs are greatly to be admired. And such men, provided they fight for God, are simply to be adored.

And this was the case here. Moses had sent the twelve spies from the wilderness into Canaan, to spy out the land. They went, and all saw the same things; cities, fields, vineyards, grapes, small men and big men, and, among the big men, towering giants. And, from the time ten of them set eyes on the giants, they never saw anything else. If they looked at a city, they saw giants. If they looked at the fields and vineyards, they still saw giants. The country was full of them. They were on mountains, hills, and plains. And the longer they gazed

at them, the bigger they grew. So they made for Moses, on the run, and said: "The land is all right; but all the people we saw in it are men of a great stature. We were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." Now, as a matter of fact, neither the one nor the other of these statements was true. Not all the people were giants, only a few of them; and they themselves were anything but grasshoppers. However, this was their conclusion; so to them it was just the same as if their words had been true.

But now comes Mr. Braveheart. When he reached Moses, he was not out of breath from running, for he had not run. And the reason was that he was not afraid. He had seen the giants all right. But he had neither multiplied them nor magnified them. In addition, he had seen grapes, and in his eyes they were good grapes and big grapes; and, evidently, Mr. Braveheart liked grapes. Moreover, he liked the land, its cities, pastures, rivers, and streams. And in the face of all these, what were a few giants? Of course, it meant a fight. But most good things had to be fought for. And besides, God had told them to go up and possess the land, and that ended the matter. So Mr. Braveheart said to Moses, "If the Lord delight in us, He will give us the land; and as for those pitiable giants, they are bread for us; fear them not!" Why, a man like this, if he only had had a chance, would have chased a thousand

giants, and two of them would have put ten thousand to flight! But alas, he had to turn back to a wilderness-life because the rest of his people were cowards.

I do not ask you, my friend, if there are giants in your Canaan. There are, of course, plenty of them. But this I do ask you: Against whom are you measuring them? If you are measuring them against yourself, then they are giants indeed, and you are nothing but a little, invertebrate grasshopper—in your sight and theirs. But suppose you measure them against God. What, now, are these same giants? Let Caleb tell you: They are just nice, appetizing, wholesome bread, all baked and ready for your eating. In the name of Caleb's God then, be a Braveheart and gobble them up. After this, you can go up to the sunlit hills, and feed on the big grapes.

40

TO GOD IN A CRISIS

"And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces; and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them."—Num. 20:6.

LEADERSHIP is a very sorry business sometimes. It is all right so long as the followers are good. But the day they turn bad, woe betide the man at the head. Such a one, on the day this happens, will find, suddenly, that *vox populi* is anything but *vox Dei.*

Leaders are tested by such reversals in sentiment and behaviour. It is comparatively easy to be a leader, when the followers are angels in human form. But when these supposed celestials once become demons, then comes the rub. At such a moment, a leader generally finds out—and others do—what he is, and, especially, what he is not.

Various great leaders have had different ways of dealing with crises of this sort. Alexander the Great used to give a big feast to his generals, and thus placate them. Napoleon used to fly to his Josephine—or some other woman—and get his comfort until the mad bellowing was past. Glad-

stone was in the habit of seeking his beloved Hawarden and his classical studies until the political storm had blown over, and the changeful crowd had called once more for their trusted pilot. And Chinese Gordon, when shut in and threatened on every side by fanatical hordes, found his relief in tying his handkerchief outside of his tent, then going within, and communing with God.

The verse next before our text, makes it plain that Moses and Aaron had reached a big crisis. They had led Israel triumphantly from Egypt into the wilderness, and leaders and followers had gone from victory unto victory. Moses and Aaron, no doubt, thought things were going fine. But, suddenly, that adulating people began to murmur, and before long, by looks, words, and actions, they were ready to tumble their pedestaled heroes into the dust. Just here, came the test. What would Moses and Aaron do? Would they throw up their job? Would they turn back to Egypt, and let the people get on as best they could? Would they before parting give them a piece, and a very big piece, of their mind? What *would* they do?

The text does not say what they would do. It just tells us what they did. They went before Jehovah and fell on their faces there. Not all leaders, in like circumstances, would have done this. Nevertheless, how sensible it was. Indeed, everything considered, it was the only thing to do. For the crisis was so great and threatening that

God was the only one who could give them deliverance. And what an answer they got: "The glory of the Lord appeared unto them." Jehovah took their side, and He made short work of both murmurs and murmurers.

Oh, leader of men, if you ever get into big trouble, go to Jehovah. As surely as you do this, you will find that He will show you His glory, and will deal effectively with the trouble and with the troublers. Thus, in your day of crisis, you will prove yourself to be a leader, indeed.

41

THE ULTIMATE TEST

"Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's high way, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders."—Num. 20:17.

AFTER years of wanderings in the wilderness the people of Israel had come to the time when they might hope to enter into Canaan. That fair land of promise lay now only a few miles distant, and its hills and vales, its cities and towns, could already be seen. The hearts of the people beat fast. The anticipations of many years were about to be fulfilled. They were to be, at last, God's chosen people in His chosen land.

But there was a final hindrance. The land of Edom lay between themselves and Canaan; and the Edomites, if they were so disposed, could give them plenty of trouble and could even shut them out from their inheritance. Israel could count upon a racial affinity with Edom; but would the king of Edom recognize this? Care, evidently, would have to be used and adroit measures adopted. Moses

the statesman therefore came forth with his proposal. The children of Israel would not pass through the fields, nor through the vineyards; nor would they drink of the water of the wells; they would go by the king's highway, not turning to the right hand nor to the left, until they had passed their borders. The proposition was a fair one and the plan a good one. There was only one way to get through such an enemy's country, namely, to admit that they had no right there, to promise to take nothing from it, and thus to keep out of all by-paths and walk steadily and persistently in the broad highway. If Edom had accepted the proposal and Israel had held to its conditions Canaan would have been quickly reached and inherited.

All this is parallelism and has a direct application to ourselves. We Christians, spiritually speaking, are journeying toward our Canaan—which is not heaven but the earthly life of attainment in Christ—and its fair fields, vineyards, and watercourses are already in view. A little more travel, a few more victories, a further exhibition of trust in our Great Leader, and we may put the soles of our feet in the land and claim its riches as our own.

But, spiritually speaking, the land of Edom lies before us and bars our progress. Here is a last and non-takeable stronghold, in whose borders there is a foe too numerous and stout for us. If ever we get through this last enemy's country, it will be as a

result, not of open warfare but of self-disciplining and self-denial. There is, therefore, only one hope for us—that we shall deal radically with ourselves by keeping out of all by-paths and by walking undeviatingly in the highway of the King.

And just here is where our greatest test is met and where failure most often comes. We long for Canaan, and we get in sight of it. But the last, short, sharp passage of dealing drastically with ourselves, inclusive of little things, is too much for us. We like the King's highway, but we also like the little by-paths, to this field, to that vineyard, and to all the various wells of water. And so, not being equal to keeping exclusively in the appointed highway, we are turned back to the wilderness and shut out of our Canaan. Oh, the pathos of it, when the land is so very fair and is already well within our view! May God pity us! And may He yet make us brave, not only to subdue the open and big enemies of the wilderness, but also the secret and little enemies upon Canaan's borderland—ourselves and our last-yielded sins.

42

WHOSE WORD WAS LAW

"And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more."—Num. 22:18.

BALAAM was a pretty poor sort of man. He was the Demas of the Old Testament, with one hand stretched out toward God, the other dug deep into the world.

Nevertheless, there were some good things about Balaam. And among these there was one which was specially good and which made him compare favorably with persons whose general character was far better than his. And this good thing was this: He could not and would not, for all the gold Balak might offer him, go beyond the word of the Lord. It was not that Balaam did not like the gold. It glittered before his eyes and fascinated him. He would have given almost his life for it, and was willing to sell his honour for it.

But there was a point beyond which he would not proceed. God was God, and His word was true and abiding. If he could keep that word inviolate and still get Balak's treasure, he would do both.

But if the choice had to be made, whatever the loss he would hold to the word of the Lord, and would not speak less or more. And for this one virtue, Jehovah took up the man, gave him a special filling of the Spirit, and used him to give voice to the most wonderful prophecy concerning Israel which is to be found in all the Scriptures.

It is evident that God thinks much of His Word. And it is also evident that He thinks much of the man who thinks as He does about it. You may have many vices, dear man of God, and few virtues. But if you have not the vice of playing fast-and-loose with the Scriptures, and have, at least, the one virtue of holding it in all its integrity and fulness, God will stand by you and is likely to make use of you. It is not that He will like your vices and will be indifferent about the fewness of your virtues. It is this: The written Word is the expression of the incarnate Word, and the man who honours the One through the other will be honoured by Him.

It is no small thing, then, to be orthodox in thought and expression. Indeed, it is better to be orthodox and loveless than to be lovable and unorthodox. It is best, of course, to be both lovable and orthodox. But if the choice between the two, at any time, has to be made, let orthodoxy stand. Balaam, any day, is to be preferred to an Alexander the coppersmith. Balaam manward, was false, but, Godward, was true; while Alexander,

manward, was very likely true, but, Godward, he was as false as hell. So dear man of God, whatever the cost, hold to the Word. At the same time, be not loveless but lovable, and to this end, as you hold the Word, let the Word hold you.

43

A TIME FOR TRUMPETS

"And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you."—Num. 29:1.

SAM JONES used to say that a good many Christians made him think of the Mississippi steamboats, which had such big whistles and small boilers that, every time they wanted to blow their whistles, they had to stop the boat. But the saints of our text, all appearances to the contrary, were not like these. These were those who wanted to move and blow at the same time, and it was only because God forbade their doing this, that they stopped as they blew.

Now, all this seems primitive and inconsequential. Why should not the saint go on with his toil as he blows his trumpet, or else blow his trumpet as he goes on with his toil? Can he not work with his right hand and blow with his left and so do double duty and enjoy a twofold privilege? And yet, God, who is never primitive nor inconsequential, says, "No!" At least, he forbids it on this occasion, on the seventh month, on the first day

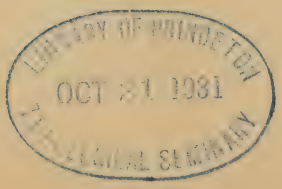
of the month and during the holy convocation. There must be a reason, then, for the injunction, and that of a serious kind. Let us see what it is:

God had taught the children of Israel that toil was a necessary and honourable thing. While rest had its place, toil had been given the larger place, there being one day for rest and six days for work. He expected, then, that men would labour, even like Himself, being His under-lords in the world of which He was Over-lord, and bringing into fruition that which He had created. Men, therefore, were destined to work; and, in Paul's day, the divine law was promulgated that if a man did not work he was not to eat. But toil was not the only thing that God had enjoined man to do. He was not only to work, but he was also to rest. And this rest was as important, if not actually more important, than the toil. While rest was the lesser part of God's commandment, mathematically, it was not, spiritually. It was one of those things in God's economy which was far bigger than it seemed, its value not being measured by time but rather by the worth of the soul and its relationship to God. If toil was good, rest was better. If toil was necessary, rest was imperative. The order was, first toil and then rest. But the toil having been fulfilled, the rest was surely to follow. Toil was for the purpose of rest; and rest was its outcome and fruition.

And what about the trumpets? These were not to be blown during the months of toil, but only

after them. When toil had ceased and rest had been secured, then there was to be a great fanfare of noise, the trumpets being blown as loudly as possible in the presence of the Lord. In other words, the trumpets were not blown in order that rest might be enjoyed, nor while rest was being sought for; but only after rest had been obtained and because it had been secured. Work produced rest, and then rest produced joy and praise; and hence, when they had reached their rest they trumpeted with all their might.

Do you see, my friend? So far as you are concerned, it just means that you will never be wholly happy till you find your full rest in Christ, and that you must keep silent, as far as praise is concerned, till that rest has been obtained. But it also means that the day that you cease from your labour as God did from His, *then* you can get out your trumpet, and blow as hard and as long as you please.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44

INTO CANAAN

"Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them."—Deut. 1:8.

THE old theologians, who wrote in prose and poetry, generally held that Canaan was a type of heaven. There is an element of truth in this view of things, for close spiritual parallels between Israel and the church may be run and these point in such a direction. Both are under a great leader; both wander through an earthly wilderness; both go forward as the result of conquering opposing enemies; both have to pass through the death of Jordan, and both inherit, at last, a goodly land, where God is and where He is worshipped in intimate and unbroken fellowship, Canaan being the inheritance of Israel and heaven that of the Church.

But a more careful investigation of Scripture, and especially its general typology, has given modern students another and truer view of the typical meaning of Canaan. It is seen that only so much of the land could be occupied as might be actually claimed and possessed; that there were conflicts

against great enemies there as well as in the wilderness; that much of the land had to be reclaimed from barrenness and sterility; and that it was not only a place of life but also of death; and it is recognized that all these things militate against the thought of Canaan being a fit representation of heaven.

Students, therefore, have reached the conclusion that this earthly life is represented not only by the wilderness, but also by the promised land; that Jordan flowing between is a type not so much of physical death, as of spiritual; that the wilderness sets forth the Christian's walk, with its many blessings and not a few victories, but this apart from the fulness of the life which is in Christ Jesus; and that Canaan portrays the same walk, with more and fuller blessings, and larger and more triumphant victories; and all as a result of having that life and life abundant which Christ came and promised to give.

Our text then, typically, points to Christ; it calls us to view our possessions in Him; it exhorts us to possess our possessions; and it makes clear that we have a right both to anticipate and realize these, since they were promised to our fathers and through them to us.

All the above, physically, was offered to Israel. All, spiritually, is offered to us. The folly of Israel in not accepting and enjoying God's provision for them is beyond describing. What then shall we

say of ourselves? They dealt with types; we deal with anti-types. They walked in revelation's shadow; we are in its full and glorious light. They had an earthly leader; we have a heavenly. They knew in part; we know almost in whole. They were incited by the physical; we, by the spiritual. And yet we do little more than gaze at Canaan, writing prose and poetry about its beauties, and singing, with full choir and organ, about its glories, while we never enter in. And all the while Jehovah cries to us as He did to Israel: "Go in and possess the land!" How would it do to gaze, write, and sing less, and then—to speak in modern English—get a move on? This last, after all, is what we need and God wants, and nothing else will do. Hearken! God's commanding word is—"Go forward!"

45

DRY-EYED BEFORE DISCOURAGEMENTS

"Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged."—Deut. 1:21.

GOD, in dealing with His servants, always does two things for them: He puts a land before them and a command behind them. The "land" may take many forms, such as consecration, sanctification, service, or fruitfulness, but it is always lying out before our eyes, fair and beautiful to look upon and very full of promise. The command may be expressed in many ways, such as "Go forward," "Go up," and "Go in," but it is ever ringing in our ears, resonant and impelling. All of which proves that Jehovah is a God of grace, and that He is ever seeking both to entice and constrain us.

There are two things, however, which hinder, in respect to going forward, our being either induced or compelled; the one is fear and the other is discouragement. For every sight we have of the land we see real or imaginary enemies everywhere; and, as is usual in such cases, these multiply as we look and grow bigger as we gaze. It is then that fear and discouragement set in, and it is thus that they

increase. Tears act like prisms before the eyes; and nothing is more distorting to a natural and normal vision than the tears of fear and discouragement. After a man has wept like a coward, he is likely to turn like one and run for his life. It is a good thing, therefore, for us to keep dry-eyed in order that we may not see more or bigger enemies than there actually are.

And there are indeed enemies, enough of them and big enough without adding either to their number or stature. Sure enough, there is the goodly land; there are the busy cities and quiet villages; there are the fragrant vineyards and fruitful fields; there are the rushing streams and still waters; but in the midst of all, lording over all, ready to oppose any and all who would come in and take possession, are great peoples, haughty of heart, fierce of countenance, and strong of arm. There is plenty of occasion then, for fear and discouragement. Nevertheless, we are not to be afraid nor discouraged. We are to find out how many foes there are; we are to take knowledge of their every means of defense and offense; we are mentally to measure their muscles, upper and lower; we are to look them full in the face; and then, in the name of our God, we are to take heart and smite every one of them, hip and thigh.

And why, and how? There is just one explanation for so daring a procedure. God has commanded it, and His commands are always full and perfect enablings.

46

FOR LOYALTY A REWARD

"Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the Lord."—Deut. 1:35, 36.

It is a great thing to be one of God's favourites and to meet with His approval. But not many men, much as they may desire to secure such favour, are willing to pay the necessary price for it. The price that Caleb paid was that he wholly followed the Lord. It was manifestly a good investment, for God saw to it, as a result, that His servant had as his possession in the land every square mile and rod and foot which his feet had trodden. Nevertheless, it meant on Caleb's part an equivalent of life and service, for day by day, hour by hour, and moment by moment the saint had to choose the Lord's path and walk in it.

"Tit for tat" is a common saying, and has never had anything but a commonplace application. Yet, the phrase expresses a great and abiding truth. This is particularly the case in spiritual matters,

for it is ever so that if we get we must give and what we give we get. Paul, in his day, having the farmer in mind, put the fact like this: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." He might have said, having a merchant in mind, "Whatsoever a man payeth, that shall he also obtain." In every case, to use a legal phrase, it is a *quid pro quo*.

It is this equivalent fact in spiritual experience which makes Christianity so much to be respected. How we should despise it if it gave us everything for nothing; how we do esteem it since it requires something for everything. We are not speaking, of course, of salvation, where we get all without money or price. We refer rather to service and consequent rewards. Here, every trolley-car along the line is a pay-as-you-enter-car, and you can only ride as far as your fare allows. We like a line of this sort. It appeals to us as one which is run on business principles. In other words, we love our Christian religion, just as it is. It is what we should hope it would be, what we want it to be, and what we are glad that it is, and this, way down to its last detail. It is all honest and aboveboard, and as trustworthy as the day is long. Mr. Roosevelt would have called it, from first to last, a "square deal"; and so it is.

Now, my brother, you have agreed with me, have you not? But tell me, what price are you paying for your portion of the promised land? Are you, like Caleb, wholly following the Lord? If you are,

you will get a veritable acreage of return. But if you are not, then remember that there is a good chance of your getting a space just two feet by six —enough for your friends to bury you in—and no more. Do not be content with this. Pay the price, and so get your big reward.

47

THE UNDEFEATED CONQUEROR

"From Aroer, which is by the brink of the river of Arnon, and from the city that is by the river, even unto Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us: the Lord our God delivered all unto us."—Deut. 2:36.

THE God of Israel was certainly a conqueror. No matter how numerous the enemies, how invincible the armies, how great the cities and how non-takeable the fortresses, the Lord did them up, one and all, whenever He got at them. As we look back upon that oldtime warfare we search our memories in vain for an occasion when He proved unequal to His task of fighting and defeating. He never lost. He always won.

This does not mean that Israel was never defeated and was always victorious. Quite the opposite of this is true. Israel went down before their foes again and again. And at such times Israel involved God in defeat and thus in disgrace. But this was not necessary. Indeed, the issue might have been wholly contrary to this. If Israel, at such times, had only given God a fair field, He would have marched forth, whatever the conditions, conquering and to conquer. But they

limited the Holy One of Israel, and, hence, their defeat was His. But on such occasions, God remained the conqueror. His potentiality never changed. He simply was not allowed to be what He was.

In the record before us, we have no mention of Israel's failures. It is an undiluted story of God's successes. Through a wide reach of country, against a great number of cities, over innumerable foes, God went marching on, downing His enemies on every hand. And for once, evidently, Israel let Jehovah have His royal and magnificent way. As for them, they just followed on behind, doing what they were bidden to do, for the most part quiescent rather than active, but always in the rear, and giving their invincible Leader the first place in planning and fulfilling. This made things easy for Israel. It also made things easy for God. He had helpers; and His helpers were not hinderers. He could do, therefore, what He pleased to do. And, some way, it always pleased Him to win. So Israel was able to say, "The Lord our God delivered all unto us." How sad it is that Israel ever forgot what was her privilege and so missed being God's joy and glory.

We have been wandering to and fro in our wilderness places for a good many years; we have come up in the process against many great and frowning cities; and we have had to face innumerable foes. How many victories have we won? That is, how many victories have we let God win?

We hear much, these days, of the need of great leaders. This is not our need. We need great followers. We have already a great Leader, the only One we require. The question is, who will be His rear-guard? The day we enlist for this service we shall set our faces toward victory. Every past defeat is explained by the fact that before our foe defeated us we defeated God. Let us have done with this. Let us give God the right of way, and thus allow Him to be what He is, an undefeatable conqueror. Then we shall follow on to know the Lord and conquer in, and with Him.

48

DELIVERANCE FROM FEAR

"Ye shall not fear them: for the Lord your God he shall fight for you."—Deut. 3:22.

FEAR is the most destroying of all emotions. Let a man really fear and he is at an end of himself. Peace satisfies; joy exhilarates; love elevates, but fear exterminates. Most of the suicides which take place in the world—there is of late a terrible increase of them—are caused by fear. For some reason or other, a man comes to fear; and then he ends it all—or, at least, he thinks he does—by taking his life. Those who fear and do not take their lives, live on, but in a life that is death.

It is a wonderful thing, therefore, to be delivered from fear. Any one who can lift the soul out of such an abyss is great indeed; and the man who is so lifted is to be greatly felicitated. Thus one of the greatest verses in the Bible is Hebrews 2:15, where, speaking of Christ and the Christian, it says, "And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Here is a Deliverer and here are the delivered. Here Perfect Love casts out fear. And here the one who is at last fearless can say, "There is no fear in love." So this one does not wish to "end it all." He wants

to continue it all, so long as life lasts, and then throughout eternity. Fear gone, the knees stiffen, the head is raised, the eyes glisten, there is a song in the heart and upon the lips, and the craven man who feared looks even at death unafraid. What wonder that Christ, when He was on earth, began most of His salutations with the words, "Fear not"! He knew man's need and He had come fully and eternally to meet it.

Now, this is what God undertook to do for Israel. They were about to enter the promised land. Some blessed experiences lay behind them, in which Jehovah had shown Himself to be a man of war of the triumphant sort. But also some hard experiences lay before them, in which they might have no hope of conquest if Jehovah were not on their side. There were kingdoms between them and Canaan, and their kings were so used to war, so artful and irresistible in fighting, that the issue was a foregone conclusion, that of victory for the kings, if God should not take Israel's part. A flock of kids in the midst of a pack of wolves has not much of a chance unless there be a shepherd strong and true.

So the whole matter turned upon this question—Where would Jehovah be and what would He do? No wonder, then, that the children of Israel feared. If you and I had been there we should have quaked, from the crown of our heads to the soles of our feet. But the question which was asked was

answered and that blessedly; Jehovah would be there and He would come forth with his arm bared and with sword in hand. And hence it was that He sent his message to Israel: "Ye shall not fear them: for the Lord your God he shall fight for you." After that, I reckon Israel had a praise-meeting; and I am inclined to think that they held it *before* the battle.

49

THE GOD WHO CAN BE KNOWN

"Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him."—Deut. 4:35.

IF ANY of us should want proof that God is God, how easy it would be for us to find it! Consider the eye through which we look, the ear with which we listen, the hand with which we handle, the foot with which we walk. These things are not far off but near, a part of our body, ourselves, and they are so common that they are simply commonplace itself. And yet each and all of these constantly witness to a personal, intelligent, beneficent and compassionate God. We do not then have to ascend into the heavens or descend into the abyss, or go into the laboratory, or study philosophy in order to find God. He is nigh us; He presses Himself upon us; He says, "See, I am here; as revealed in yourself; it is I, and I am God."

If then, you are in doubt, man, stop and study yourself. You will never, for instance, make better use of your looking-glass than to gaze upon your reflected image there and ask yourself, "Who made this soft and flexible skin; these hairs on my head; these eyebrows and eyelashes, so wonderfully placed and adapted for their purposes;

these self-cleansing, translucent, reflecting, self-adjusting and seeing eyes?" Do this in all honesty, my friend, and you will not ask again, "Is there a God?" and, "Where is He to be found?" On the contrary, you will say, "He is, and He is here."

Dr. Young, that Christian astronomer of Princeton—in the olden days when there were more Christian astronomers than now—once saw through his telescope a tongue of flame leap out from the face of the sun. The doctor measured it before it disappeared, and found that it was six thousand miles in length, from the sun's surface to the flame's extremity. And it is said that this man of God knelt in his observatory and worshiped the One who could work so wonderfully and majestically as that. But, once more, we do not need to go to the sun to find God. He is as near to us as hands and feet, and, above all, as heart, and nearer than this He cannot be.

It is this that our verse means. God had displayed His majesty to Israel in Egypt by many signs. And He had but one purpose in it, whether the sign was given by voice, or by war, or by a mighty hand, or by a stretched-out arm, or by great terrors; He was seeking to prove that He was God, and that there was none beside Him. And what Jehovah then sought to do, He is now seeking to do. He is ever saying to us, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is myself." Shall we not then fall with Thomas at His feet and cry, "My Lord and my God"?

50

TRIUNE AND ONE

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord."—Deut. 6:4.

THERE is no more precious doctrine in the Word than that of the Trinity. It is of infinite worth to the heart and life to know that there are three Persons in the Godhead, each with His separate place and office, and each intent upon bringing to pass the beneficent purposes of Deity. How safe one feels under the care of these three Holy Ones! And how powerful one is to brave and do, and even to suffer with each and all of them on one's side. This aspect of the Godhead is a truth which the Church needs to hold in great steadfastness, both for her own sake and for that of the future generations of mankind. Without faith in God, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, life will cease to have meaning, and men will perish.

But the doctrine of the Unity of the Godhead is as important, and also as precious, as that of the Trinity. Three Persons there are, but these are inherently, indissolubly, and eternally united. Take one Person in the Word, study His nature, character, and acts, and apart from place and office, you have at once the revelation of the other two. Each, evidently, is self-existent, self-maintaining,

unending, omnipresent, omnipotent, all-wise, all-powerful—everything which Deity is. And each is linked to the other in desire and purpose, so that their objective in salvation, sanctification, and glorification is absolutely one and the same. What an undefeatable combination this is. How majestic and magnificent the three Persons are, in union and unity. What wonder that the spirit of Jehovah cried out, as in our text: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord"! This, too, should be our message to the Church and the world. And, too, without the truth of God's unity, life will cease to have meaning, and men will perish.

In view of the above, which is the revelation of God's Word, how pitiable it is, in these days, to hear learned men talk of a First Cause, an Evolutionary Process, Resident Force, and an Electron. What are these *things* beside God's *Personality!* The reason men accept them in substitution for God is simply this: divine Personality means human responsibility, and sinful hearts do not care for the latter. I read some time since an atheistic article written by a socialist. Its last words were these: "Exit God! Behold—*Man*!" And what of man, after God is put off of the scene? The article did not say. But God tells us: "If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good" (Josh. 24:20). It will be well for us then, if we continue to believe in the Triune, yet One God.

51

LEST GOD BE FORGOTTEN

"Beware lest thou forget."—Deut. 6:12.

"God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

"The tumult and the shouting dies;
The captains and the kings depart;
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!"

THUS sang Kipling. But a greater prophet than he first immortalized the words of our text. They were sounded by Moses in the ears of Israel when they were gathered before him in solemn assembly to hear the commandments of God. At that time Moses cried: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." And then he added: "Beware lest thou forget!"

Times have changed since that faroff day. Nations have spread themselves over the face of the earth and they now rightfully call themselves,

"great powers." Yet the need of men has not changed. On the contrary, it has increased and intensified. For since men have become great, they have become proud; and since they have become proud, they have forgotten that God alone is God, and that men are but men—little, sinful, dying men. So then there is need of the same oldtime message. This is the reason why Kipling's verse pierced the hearts of men, for it made them remember that they *needed* to remember.

A Roman emperor, when making his triumphal entry into Rome, used to station behind him in his chariot one who constantly spoke in his ears these words: "Imperator, recollect that thou art but a man!" Happy the Christian, in these tempting days, who opens his ear to the warnings of God's prophets, and who thus remembers to walk before the Eternal One with bowed head and softened footfall.

52

RESOLUTE BECAUSE UNAFRAID

"Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the Lord thy God is among you, a mighty God and terrible."—Deut. 7:21.

FEAR is a terrible thing; it is so prostrating. As Wordsworth, concerning one of his heroines, says:

> "Fear hath a hundred eyes that all agree
> To plague her beating heart."

To fear is to see danger on every side and to anticipate evil at every turn. And when one has reached such a stage as this, one is simply overwhelmed and beyond recovery.

It was to deliver us from fear, among other things, that God sent His Son into the world, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." God thus went to the heart of our weakness and impotency, and, dealing radically with these, provided an infinite cure. Delivering us from fear, He established us in strength and power. Such a process is true even in natural things. Napoleon once said, speaking of his own

experience, that fear made him useless in battle until he remembered that his enemy was probably more frightened than he. This remembrance turned his fear into courage and made him invincible. And the same is true in spiritual affairs.

But the best cure for fear, in the Christian experience, is not found by looking at our enemies, but, rather, at God. As touching our enemies, they may not be more frightened than we are, and they certainly are not when they are demon spirits, fallen angels, and Satan. To gaze upon these giant forms and into these malignant faces is, rightfully, not to diminish, but to increase fear. For who of us can stand against such masters of warfare as these? Consider, for instance, Paul's description of them: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Here is an army which is terrible in its operations against us, and hence any one of us may safely reach the conclusion that we can have no hope in sight of such foes. The man who does not fear in such a situation simply knows nothing of the reality of things.

But there is one look which, even here, drives away fear. Is Satan high? God is higher. Is Satan a prince? God is a King. Has Satan a host of evil spirits to serve him? God has innumerable angels at His command. Is Satan mighty? God is almighty. Can Satan destroy? God can deliver.

There is nothing which Satan can do which God cannot do. And there are innumerable things which God can do which Satan cannot do. It is for us, therefore, not to look at Satan, but at God. In other words, as our text tells us, we are constantly to remember this: "The Lord thy God is among you, a mighty God and terrible." Taking our place upon the vantage ground of this assurance and thus being delivered from all fear, we may stand and withstand, and, having overcome all, we may yet stand.

53

ALLIED WITH GOD

"Understand therefore this day, that the Lord thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the Lord hath said unto thee."—Deut. 9:3.

IT IS a safe rule of interpretation in studying the Old Testament texts to accept it as a fact that what they set forth for Israel physically, they present to us spiritually. This does not mean that the literal application should not first be given to them; it only means that a spiritual one may and should be added to them. It is this combination of the literal and spiritual which makes the Old Testament so interesting and instructive in these New Testament times. For thus, in spite of the Jewish historicity of the Old Testament, its spiritual content becomes potent to every new-born soul. This is what Paul meant when he said, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

We have an illustration of this in the verse which

is before us. The history of the verse is this: Israel was about to pass over Jordan, and presently they would be face to face with "a people great and tall, the children of the Anakims." These giants were a forceful lot, well trained for warfare and confident in their prowess. Moreover, they had not the least fear of Israel, or even of Israel's God. That little despised people could come out any time they might please, and, for all of them, they might come into battle with prayers and songs upon their lips. The outcome was inevitable; they, the Anakims, would simply annihilate them, and then they would enjoy their land in peace. This was the situation from every natural standpoint. And the worst of the matter was that the Israelites knew it as well as the Anakims.

It is evident, however, that God had a few additional thoughts. He understood that it was not only a case of the natural, but also of the supernatural. He knew that Israel could not stand against the Anakims. But He also knew that the Anakims could not stand against Him. If Israel would only fight with Him, there would be annihilation, only it would be of another people than Israel. It is with these thoughts in mind that He appears before His people, and utters the words of our text.

Another battle is on. The foes are too many and mighty for us. As surely as we shall fight, we shall be defeated. But a voice sounds from heaven, and

it is that of Him who spoke to Israel: "Understand therefore this day, that the Lord thy God . . . shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face." Shall we go out with Jehovah, and win?

54

WITH WHOM IS NO INJUSTICE

"For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward."—Deut. 10:17.

MANY a man would like to bribe God, as the Chinese try to bribe their gods. But it cannot be done. A Chinaman will make his offerings of food and incense before his god and seek to tickle its fancy by setting off firecrackers before it; and he is credulous enough to imagine that his sweets and noises have placated the infinite. Jehovah, however, is above and beyond all such puerility of worship. And most men know it. But there are some who hold on to heathen superstitions and try the bribing act, even, at times, within the very house of God.

Do you see that man yonder? How loudly he sings, how reverently he prays, how earnestly he listens. Nevertheless, he is a scoundrel, through and through, and, if he had his deserts, he would be in prison and not in church. What he is doing here in church is simply trying to balance accounts with God. His method is first crime, and then re-

ligion, and he thinks the religion will prove, in the scales of God, the equivalent of the crime.

Do you see that woman yonder? What grace, what humility, what sincerity. Nevertheless, she is deep-dyed in sin, and if she had her deserts, she would be the offscouring of the town. What she is doing here in the sanctuary is simply trying to secure God's favor, in spite of her sin. Her method is, first sin, and then worship. What folly! One cannot plaster over with sweets God's eyes and mouth. Our Jehovah sees all and He will speak; and He is beyond all bribing.

The reason God will not be bribed is because He is the God of gods and Lord of lords. Being this —as our text says—He is "mighty," and "terrible," and he "regardeth not persons." If He were a lesser god, little in His character and ways, then the rich man, in spite of his crime, would be at a premium, and the gracious lady, in spite of her sin, would have it all her own way; and each could sin *ad libitum*, with a bit of religion at the end to square the account.

Happily for these, as for all others, God insists upon being just. It is in this way that He becomes the justifier of the ungodly. It is better then, to take the place of a penitent, trusting sinner, and so become a forgiven saint and a free-born son of God.

55

SELF-CONDEMNED TO LITTLENESS

"Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be."—Deut. 11:24.

ISRAEL, even in her palmiest days, never possessed her possessions. God had given her a vast territory, from Lebanon to the southern wilderness and from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates. But the most Israel ever secured was the central and western section of this vast expanse. From first to last, she was satisfied with a small part of the great whole. If she could eke out an existence, could have a king upon the throne like the other nations, and could possess a temple-magnifical, she was well content.

As for the larger things, the things that reached northward and southward, eastward and westward, the things that looked toward the whole earth and would make her a universal blessing, she never troubled either to long for or endeavour to secure them. And in taking such a course she did far more than deprive herself of advantages; she actually became a robber of God. For Jehovah had

promised her a great land in order that she might be a great people; and this not simply for her good, but also and particularly for His glory. It is sad to think of what she might have been and done and of what she failed to be and do; and it is still more sad to think of what she might have brought to God and what she failed to bring to Him. And so Israel, seeking for little things, got exactly what she sought,—a shriveled-up existence, and, at last, the judgment of God. How pathetic the story is, especially when it might have been so different.

Before utterly condemning Israel, may we ask ourselves how far we have possessed our possessions. If one wants to know just what these are, he can find it out by turning to Paul's letter to the Ephesians, third chapter, seventeenth verse, onward: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith: that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." This is indeed "a land of far distances," where no eye can see from the centre of it to its utmost bound. It is broader than the earth, deeper than the sea, and higher than the heavens. It is Infinitude—measureless, incalculable, exhaustless, and eternal. And it is all for us.

What a land of inheritance God has given to us in Christ. But alas! the most of us have chosen

a little plot of ground, just big enough to contain our snug house and pretty garden, and with this we are altogether content! There can be no doubt about the fact that we need to hear the Voice which spoke to Abraham of old, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever" (Gen. 13:14, 15). And when we have seen our goodly land in Christ, we need to do, spiritually speaking, what Abraham did, physically speaking, who rose, pitched his tent in the centre of his inheritance, and took possession of what God had given to him.

56

JOY IN EVERY EXPERIENCE

"Ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto."—Deut. 12:7.

THERE are some strange sayings in the Word of God, and this is one of them. The text seems to signify that one may take any course and do anything, and all the while be as happy as a king: "Ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto." And we say, "ye" means ye, and "all" means all, nothing more, and, as well, nothing less.

But in spite of an apparently plain meaning, some difficulties stand in the way of our coming to such a conclusion. One difficulty is that experience is against it; and another is that certain portions of the Word are opposed to it. As for experience, new-born souls may never find joy in anything besides discovering and doing the will of God. And as for the Scripture, "ye" does not always mean ye and "all" does not always mean all. Let us consider these statements:

Each one of us has found out that there is nothing so prostrating as sin. Physical ill is not to be compared with spiritual; for bodily disease does not necessarily mean soul undoing, while soul disease generally includes physical overwhelming. Paul

was frequently sick; but he rejoiced in the Lord always. Peter, on the other hand, was generally well; but the day he denied his Lord he went out and wept bitterly, and on that occasion, no doubt, he was at a low ebb physically. Moreover, we have only to remember our personal experiences to be well assured of the fact that we have by no means rejoiced in all that we have put our hand to, but only in that which we have wrought in accordance with the will and way of God.

In spite of our text, therefore, it is clear that a scriptural "ye" and "all" do not always mean just what they seem to mean, but only so much as may be intended by the divine Spirit. Take, for instance, Paul's text, "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13, R. V.). Manifestly in this phrase, Paul did not mean that his "all" meant all, for the apostle knew that he could not, while in the flesh, be sinless, that he could not escape from dying, and that he could not assume the resurrection body before the coming of Christ. In fact, Paul was aware that there were many and great limitations upon the word "all" as he used it. What the apostle meant then, was this: that he could do all the things which were possible for him in Christ, that is, which would have Christ's approval, and hence for which he would have His empowering.

But the fact remains that God meant, as expressed in the text, that Israel should live in His

will and walk in His way and thus should continually be happy. And what was true for Israel is true for us. We may indeed live such lives in Christ as will call perpetually for Divine favor. And when we have this experience, it will be true that we shall rejoice in all that we do.

57

PECULIAR TO GOD

"Thou are a holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself."—Deut. 14:2.

WE ARE tempted to think that it is pretty hard of God to command us to go one way, when all the world is going the other. Why should we not conform? Or, if we should not actually conform, why should we not drift? Is it, after all, so important a matter that we should be transformed, and thus always be struggling against the current of life? And is it possible that God would have us constantly opposed to our fellows, even at the cost of our human feelings and natural joys? If all this is the fact, it looks as if we must conclude that being a Christian is a rather dismal experience.

Granting that the above is true; granting that even more than the above is true, would it not, after all, be worth while to be a Christian? Christ had a hard path in which to walk, and He never complained. And the apostles followed in His blood-marked ways, and they never complained. Apparently, Master and disciples believed that being peculiar had some compensating advantages, and that these made the separated life decidedly worth while. These are great examples, and their

choice and practice deserve consideration. In view of them, may we not argue like this?

First: having forfeited by reason of sin our right to be comfortable and happy, God is well within His right, if He so choose, to ask us to be otherwise. In other words, God does not owe us things which make for peace. If He gives us these, it is simply and only a matter of grace. It must never be forgotten that He would be justified, so far as our deserts are concerned, in putting us in the abyss at any time and for any length of time, and that the only reason He does not do this, is because of Christ's meritorious death on Calvary's Cross. Being unpeculiar, therefore, is not our right. In the nature of the case, having been bought by precious blood, we are a peculiar people.

Second: since God possesses us and we are thus His children, it is His fatherly duty and privilege to instruct us as to our course of life, and to bid us walk contrary to all who walk contrary to Him, whatever this may mean to us. If, in taking this course, He demands things which are contrary to our desires, we may be well assured that what He asks is necessary from the Divine standpoint, and also from our own. God's Fatherhood implies a brooding care over our lives, and a longing to obtain from them all that will make for our holiness and His glory. Our highest wisdom, therefore, will be found in this,—to recognize the infinitude of God's wisdom, and gladly surrender to it.

Third: it is to be remembered that grace is very generous in its processes and result. While, therefore, God owes us nothing, He will give us everything, that is, everything that is glorifying to Him and beneficial to us. And on this side of experience, there will be no limitation to His giving, for He delights to give that which is good and thus to turn simple grace into grace upon grace.

Mr. Hudson Taylor, the founder of China Inland Mission, gave up a little home and a medical practice in England in order to become a missionary. Many people thought that this was a great sacrifice, and I have no doubt that sometimes this idea crossed Mr. Taylor's mind. But what was the result? Our friend was the means of throwing open the whole of the interior of China, of winning countless souls to Christ, of being enriched by a multitude of friendships, of receiving an abundant entrance into heaven and of glorifying the Name of Christ infinitely and eternally. And so, in principle, it will always be with those who separate themselves unto God, and become peculiar for His sake. For God will never be left in any man's debt, and in compensating, will give generously according to the wealth of His love and power.

Evidently, therefore, God will not fail, and His grace will prove abundantly ample. Let Him then, if He will, take everything, for as surely as He does this, He will give in return the double, and that of a better and more lasting kind.

58

ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH

"The Lord shall greatly bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it."—Deut. 15:4.

ISRAEL had a great opportunity because they had a great God. Their Jehovah owned heaven and earth, and He had both selected and prepared for His people, under His heaven and in the midst of His earth, a favoured land, which was beyond compare. And it was to this place that God was leading them. Hence God's prophecy and promise; hence, Israel's opportunity.

But the obtaining of the land of prophecy and promise was not so simple as it seemed. For, first, a wilderness journey lay between them and realization; and, second, the land itself was only to be possessed by personal occupation. Hard work, therefore, was before them, including long marches and savage battles. The question was, in spite of prophecy and promise, "Would they win out?"

As a matter of fact, not many of them *did* win out. Caleb did, and Joshua did. But never another soul passed from the wilderness into the land; they all perished on the far side of Jordan. What pathos! How utterly disappointing to Israel and

heart rending to God! A land flowing with milk and honey well in sight, and the carcasses of the men who might have inherited it lying upon the sands of the great and terrible wilderness!

So, then, prophecy and promise are not in themselves sufficient. They are inspiring and also enabling. But prophecy is to be fulfilled and promise is to be realized, and the one and the other are often divinely conditioned upon our actions. If we choose, we may turn prophecy into history and promise into fact. Also, if we choose, we may negative the one and the other. Israel, with the exception of the two heroes of faith, blocked all of God's beneficent purposes, until another and a better people had come upon the scene, and thus they lost all that they might have had. And the Church? Ah, but the story is a sad one! A land of prophecy and promise, even Christ; and few, indeed, entering in and possessing Him!

And what will the end be, for those Christians who draw not near with a true heart and full assurance of faith? Paul, using the symbol of a fruit-tree, tells us: "Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear!" As surely as God refused to fulfil prophecy and promise to Israel who would not believe, so surely will He do the same to us, if we do not believe.

59

GIVING PROPORTIONATE TO RECEIVING

"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee."—Deut. 16:17.

SOCIALISM—as generally taught—has no place either in the Old or New Testament. God gives no command that there shall be a levelling down, or up, through a common and equal distribution of personal possessions. On the contrary, He always takes it for granted that there will be various classes of men upon the earth, the high and low, the rich and poor, the learned and ignorant, and that life is to be lived out on the basis of the relationships thus established. Hence, the high are to rule the low, the rich are to give to the poor, the learned are to teach the ignorant.

That shrewd Jew, Lord Rothschild, saw the truth of this when a socialist called upon him in his banking office, demanding an equal distribution of his wealth. Having figured that two shillings and a farthing would thus be due to each person in the United Kingdom, Rothschild took this amount from his pocket, gave it to the man and dismissed him from his presence. It was a quick way of getting rid of a troublesome visitor; but more, it

was a practical demonstration of the fallacy of socialism. God has not given a like illustration in His holy Word, but He has laid down the principle implied in it, again and again. He makes it clear that He would have inequality in order that there may be variety of life and difference of ministration both in kind and degree.

Now, our text is founded upon these assumptions. It does not say that every person is to give a fixed and equal sum, as socialism would demand, but "as he is able," as the present order of things requires. Moreover, it declares in the larger and ultimate aspect of the question, that it is God and not man who is responsible for the existing inequality of possessions among men, for the individual is to give "according to the blessing of the Lord thy God." In other words, the rich are to give more and the poor less, and both are to give in exact proportion to the blessing which God has granted.

All this is Paul's rule, as expressed in his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 16:1, 2). The apostle there declares that giving is to be "upon the first day of the week," that is, orderly; that it is to be by "everyone of you," that is, individually; that each one is to "lay by him in store," that is, systematically; that each person is to give "as God has prospered him," that is, proportionately; and "that there be no gatherings when I come," that is, in a prevenient manner.

We need to seek to be delivered from legalism in our giving as in all else. And to this end, we are to apply here as elsewhere that great word of God: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17).

60

GOD ALWAYS AT HAND

"When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."—Deut. 20:1.

WHAT are horses and chariots and a people more than ourselves before such an One as Jehovah? Who made all these but God? And who maintains all these but God? And under whose dominion are all these but God's? And what can one of them, or all of them, or a great many more than they, do against God?

Besides, there was a day when God showed Israel and all the world what He could do with horses and chariots and men. It was there at the Red Sea crossing, when Israel went over dry-shod and Pharaoh and his host perished in the sea. Jehovah found no trouble, that day, in overwhelming His enemies and delivering His people. And He says here, in effect, What I have done, I can and will do. So therefore, He bids Israel and ourselves do two things; first, to remember the past, and second, to trust Him for the present and future. After this,

He promises to be the God who changes not, and hence, the God of deliverance.

The chief trouble with most of us is, as a friend of mine used to say, "Our forgetery is very great." No sooner does God interpose and win some notable battle for us, but we start in affright before a new foe, and wonder if He will be equal to these changed conditions? What a man needs to do under such circumstances is to think backward, that is, to remember. The God of yesterday is the God of to-day, and to-morrow. This is what Christ meant, when sending forth His corporal's guard into the fierce battles of life, He said, "Lo, I am with you alway," that is, literally, all the days. What they had seen Him be, and do in the past, they would learn that He would be and do, day by day, in all the future. And those men, relying on that promise, went forth conquering and to conquer.

General Gordon, that great soldier of Christ and Britain's Queen, had these lines hung up in his bedroom, and he lived and died in the strength of them:

"Oh, ask not thou, How shall I bear
The burden of to-morrow?
Sufficient for the day the care,
Its evils and its sorrow;
God imparteth by the way
Strength sufficient for the day!"

61

EVERY CONTEST A CONQUEST

"For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you."—Deut. 20:4.

THERE is a Chinese proverb which says, "The great conqueror is he who overcomes the enemy without a blow." Such a conqueror would be great indeed, for who ever heard of a victor in a fight who won his victory without fighting? And yet there is such an one. And the man is here depicted, for it is the one who fights with God, whether it be the Jew of the Old Testament or the Christian of the New.

There are some peculiar things about God as touching warfare. First, He informs us that there must be enemies. Second, He makes it clear that there will be heavy warfare. Third, He bids us go forward into the midst of the conflict. Fourth, He advises us that He will go with us. Fifth, He commands us to stand aside and let Him do the fighting. And finally, He assures us that, going with us, He will not only fight for us, but also will turn every contest into conquest.

Did ever earthly leader speak like this to his followers? Did Alexander; or Caesar; or Attila;

or Napoleon; or Wellington; or Washington; or Foch? These were great generals, and they won mighty battles. But they were not wholly frank; nor did they often say to their soldiers that they would be in their midst; nor did they bid them stand still and not fight; nor did they promise them never a defeat, but ever a glorious victory. Earthly leaders know their limitations too well to make boast of their prowess in this fashion. Before the battle they do little more than command; it is after the battle is won that they raise the flag of conquest and bid the bugles blow the pæan of victory.

But it is not so with the God of battles, the Captain of our salvation. He does all that man does; and then, all that man does not do. Hence, He is always with us; He fights without our aid; He never loses, but ever wins; He is as certain of victory before the battle as after it; and thus, He makes us, not simply conquerors, but *more* than conquerors, with Him.

It was a remarkable thing that David said in his day. He cried, "In the name of our God we will set up our banners." Mark it, not in the name of a victory won, but in the name of God. This means that David went into battle with his banners flying, for he claimed the victory, since God was on his side, before the battle was on. Let us then *stand still,* and *see* the salvation of our God.

62

A PLACE FIT FOR HIM

"The Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy; that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee."—Deut. 23:14.

IT IS a wonderful thing that God draws near His people, and this in order to deliver them from all their enemies. It is past describing to have so gracious a God and to experience the benefit of His presence and power. How different He is from the gods of the heathen, who are far removed from their devotees and are helpless to aid them in the hour of danger. But Jehovah is the living God, the One who is nigh them that are of a broken heart and who saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. With a Saviour of this kind, we should be proud to be Christians and should rejoice with a great rejoicing. David, in his day, had the right idea of things. He cried, "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; . . . O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together."

But privileges of this kind bring their responsibilities, if not their penalties. God has His side of every question, and thus, it is His right to make de-

mand of those He dwells with and befriends. What man marries a maiden but he requires purity in her to whom he gives his life? And what maiden marries a man but she requires him to be loyal to her through weal and woe, for a day and for ever? And is God less than man and woman that He should say, "I will give you all, and ask nothing in return"? Surely it is His blood-bought prerogative to ask, yea, to *demand,* anything and everything.

And what is it, just now, that God requires? The text tells us. In a word, it is cleanliness. With Israel, cleanliness of camp; and with us, cleanliness of flesh and spirit. Jehovah was to dwell in the Tabernacle, hence all of the camp, that is, the Tabernacle and everything outside of it, was to be clean; and Christ dwells in our spirits, hence all of us, that is, spirit, soul and body, is to be clean.

In other words, the pure and holy God wants a fit dwelling place, where He may live and move and have His being, without shock or grief. What a searching thought! I wonder what Jehovah is forced to look upon, in *our* camp, in *our* spirit!

63

LAY HOLD ON LIFE

"Choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."—Deut. 30:19.

THIS is one of the many paradoxes of the Word of God. If a man has life, why is he asked to choose life, and that in order that he may live? The words seem to contradict and even to negative one another.

But it is a fact that there is a death within a life, and thus that a living man may at the same time be a dead one. So the living are exhorted to choose life in order that they may live.

And note the fact that the life that is referred to is a matter of choice. In other words, the man who is dead may remain dead, if he so prefers; or he may become alive and live, if he prefers this. For God, wonderful as it is, has given him the power of decision.

It is as if a king had filled a stronghold with gold and then had given the key to the door of entrance to a beggar. The beggar, of course, could not have built the stronghold, nor could he have filled it with gold. But, being given the key, he can unlock and open the door, and he can then help himself to the gold. From the time, therefore, that the key is in his hand the choice is with him. If he desires he

may remain a beggar. Also, if he desires, he may enter the treasure-house and help himself to all the gold that is there. And the pathos of life is, that most men prefer to remain beggars rather than be beholden to the grace and largess of the king. In other words—coming back to our original thought—men prefer the life that is death, rather than the life that is life indeed.

And what is this life which is death? Is it sickness and poverty and friendlessness and uselessness? It may be. But in general, it is quite otherwise. To multitudes, it means health and riches and friends and great and altruistic activities. And to not a few, it means, in addition, learning and culture and art and music and happiness untold. Nevertheless, it is death; nothing short of deep and devastating death. For all these things may be without God and His salvation, and this is death, in spite of life and in the midst of life.

So then, a man's choice must often be made in the face of deceitful appearances and as opposed to all that seems enticingly good. Happy the man, whoever he is, who is able to stand still in the midst of the crowd, to hear God's Voice in the midst of the din, to choose what seems to be the loss in the midst of what really is the gain, and so, at last, find present and eternal life. Said Wendell Phillips, "Most people fall into nameless graves; but, now and then, some forget themselves into immortality."

64

WHO LEADS?

"Be strong and of a good courage; fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."—Deut. 31:6.

WHY should the saint be afraid of any man? Is it because the saint is little and the enemy big; because he is weak and the other strong; because he is unskilled in the arts of war and the other a pastmaster in the same? No doubt, this is the reason.

But, after all, what have all these things to do with the matter? Is it the fact that the saint fights his battles alone and unbefriended? Warfare has more than one set of elements in it, and victory depends not simply upon one but upon many, and especially upon the one who may be the leader of the fray.

The French lost the battle of Waterloo, not because they did not fight as hard and nobly as in more victorious days, but simply and only because, on that fatal day, Napoleon wholly failed them; and the English won the battle, not because they fought more earnestly and heroically than at less fortunate times, but simply and only because Wel-

lington, on that fortuitous day, proved a strategist of the first order.

So it is clear that battles are lost or won, not because of the man or men in the thick of the fray, but also and particularly because of the one who stands apart and plans and controls. The question of questions then, in any warfare, is, Who is the leader? Answer this, and you have determined the issue of the warfare.

How blessed it is to reduce our spiritual warfare to so simple a proposition as this! For granting what we have said, who can stand against the saint or saints led by such an One as Jehovah? Are we little? He is big. Are we weak? He is strong. Are we unskilled in the arts of war? He has fought since man fell and He has never yet lost a battle. We may be but grasshoppers in the sight of our giant enemies. But they are worms of the dust before Him who leads us on, just grovelling worms to be crushed under His mighty tread. There is no room for fear, therefore, and every room for courage, because Jehovah goes with us, and will not fail or forsake us.

There was found, some time since, in St. Paul's Cathedral, a leaflet with the following lines, evidently written by a soldier:

> The Captain's orders!
> He heard them come,
> Not with the beat of fife and drum
> But with the love, the hope and the song of life;

He saw his master's face,
And heard the Captain's strong, March on;
He raised his eyes,
Then stood in his firm faith to follow on.

The Captain's orders!
We heard the call;
To us it seemed the omega of all,
The love, the hope and the song of life:
But again we listened,
And we heard the Captain's strong, March on;
Then we grasped the staff of His firm faith
In love and hope to carry on.

65

SERVING AS TO GOD

"I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God."—Deut. 32:3.

MOSES, as an introduction to these great words, cried: "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth: my doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." His address, then, in the first place, was not to men, but to the heaven above and the earth beneath, and he affirmed, with this in view, that his declarations would be as soft and gentle and refreshing as the heaven-born dew and rain. After this, we may presume, his speech was for earth-dwelling men.

It is not a straining of our text to say that Moses in, and by it, laid down a great principle as to witnessing. Our thoughts, in thinking of preaching the Word, naturally move from the speaker to those persons who hear him. But this is not the teaching of Scripture concerning the declaration of truth. Always, in the Word, the emphasis is laid, in the first instance, upon the divine aspect of preaching, and only then upon the human.

Take, for instance, the word of our Lord as He

was appearing to the apostles on Mount Olivet and was preparing to ascend to heaven and leave His hearers behind Him; that word is not, "Ye shall be witnesses unto men," but, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me."

Or, take the great commission, where Christ commanded His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel; here the word, as it reads literally, is not "to every creature," but "to the whole creation," which is a very large term, having not only its earthward, but also its heavenward aspect, with a forward look toward the millennial kingdom and the blessing which will then be given to the whole creation.

Or, take the speaking of tongues, on the day of Pentecost; here, there is no evidence that the apostles preached the Word to those about them; but there is every evidence that what they did, was to offer their praise direct to God. Thus, we see that our first responsibility in witnessing, is toward God, and that it is only when this has been fulfilled, that it is toward men.

A missionary who had laboured in Africa for seven years without a convert, was about to return there after a furlough. A lady hearing this, said to him: "I shouldn't think, having laboured in Africa for seven years without any converts, that you would want to go back there." The missionary replied, "Madam, I didn't go to Africa to win souls." The lady was surprised and exclaimed,

"What, then, did you go for?" The missionary answered, "I went to glorify God, and I trust I have done that."

The missionary had the right of it. He had pleased His Father in heaven by his love and faithful service, and this was the essential part of the matter.

66

THE ROCK OF AGES

"For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges."—Deut. 32: 31.

HEATHEN religions are not without their good points. They had origin in the one true religion and in man's conscience, so that they contain not a few things which characterize Jehovah's religion. For instance, they present the thought of a Divine Being, the farther one goes back the purer this thought becoming. For instance, again, they maintain the conception of human responsibility toward God, pilgrimages, temple-worship, offerings and sacrifices being the expression of this. And for instance, again, they set forth many moral precepts, their conceptions in this respect often being idealistic. And to the extent that these religions are these things, they are stable, that is, like a rock.

But there are some things in Jehovah's religion which are not in heathen religions. For instance, it contains a pure conception of God, as the creator and preserver of the universe and the sole redeemer of men. For instance, again, it reveals the fact that Jehovah has drawn near to men in the Person of Christ, He being the Mediator between God and

men. For instance, again, it holds at the heart of it, the doctrine of the atonement, which is the only solution of the great problem of sin. For instance, again, it sets forth the truth of resurrection, which the heathen religions never suggest. And, for instance again, it teaches a universal and equitable judgment, which makes the Old and New Testament presentations of truth, wholly and exclusively unique. And these things characterizing Jehovah's religion, it is not simply stable and like a rock, it is *the* Rock.

And it is a fact that Jehovah's enemies are constrained to admit this last. The heathen, in Old Testament times, confessed again and again that no god was like Israel's God.

Pharaoh discerned this, praying that Moses and Aaron would pray for him and his people that they might be delivered from Jehovah's wrath. And Nebuchadnezzar finally admitted this, publishing it abroad that Daniel's God was a God of gods and a Lord of kings. And in newer days, in spite of confessed unbelief, poets, historians, philosophers and scientists have combined in paying tribute to the Person, character and work of Christ, who is the centre and substance of Jehovah's religion.

For instance, Napoleon, who was God's and Christ's open enemy, said: "I know men, and I tell you that Jesus is not a man. Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne and myself founded empires. But upon what did we rest the creations of our genius?

Upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded his empire upon love, and to this hour millions of men would die for Him." And so it will be to the end, till Christ makes His enemies the footstool of His feet. Verily then, their rock is not as our Rock, for our Rock is the one only foundation which God has laid, and it is the Rock of Ages.

67

SECURITY—FULL AND FINAL

"The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders."—Deut. 33:12.

IT IS a curious thing, but it is a fact that most of the people of the world are occupied a good deal of the time in looking for a place of safety, physically and spiritually. So far as the physical is concerned, what with crowded streets and rushing automobiles, one could wish to be like the living creatures in the Revelation who had eyes before and behind. And as for the spiritual, who is not seeking for a place of refuge, whether he may be a heathen who worships at his shrine, or a Christian who, having found safety in Christ, longs to "dwell deep" and so secure the peace which passes all understanding.

The word "safety," as it comes to us from the early English, means a state of being safe; and its first, and, for a time, its chief significance was a spiritual one, namely, redemption and salvation. This is suggestive, for it presents the thought that when the word was taken over from the earlier French, the constructors of the English word had

the thought in mind that real safety was only to be found in God, and His redemptive salvation. And they were right. For ultimately, in Him will be our physical salvation, since He will bring these bodies of ours into resurrection form and glory. And certainly, in Him is, and ever will be our spiritual salvation, for He has made it plain that there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved than the Name of His dear Son. Whether, therefore, it be as related to spirit, soul or body, our safety, inclusively and exclusively, is in God.

And how beautifully Moses speaks of safety! He tells us, first, that we are to dwell in safety, which means that we are to abide there, not for an hour or day or month or year, but for time and eternity. Then, he says that we are to dwell by Him, just as a little babe rests all secure in the arms, and upon the breast of his mother. Then he declares that the Lord will cover us all the day long, even as a strong warrior, in a day of battle, might cover a wounded friend with his outstretched shield. And then he affirms that we shall dwell between His shoulders, even as an eagle might fly under her failing and falling eaglet, sustain its weight, arrest its descent and bear it to upper heights and protected places.

What greater imagery could Moses have used, to assure us of our entire and eternal safety in Christ? Nay, what more could God have said in order to give us confidence that all dangers have

passed away, and that full and final security has been obtained.

A little boy was once travelling across the ocean by a steamer, of which his father was the captain. During the course of the journey a fearful storm arose, which threatened to overwhelm the vessel. Many on board were much concerned and not a few were seriously frightened. In the midst of the storm, a gentleman asked the boy if he were not afraid? "Oh no," the boy replied. The gentleman asked why. The lad looked up into the questioner's face, and, with a smile, replied, "Why sir, my father is on the bridge." And the boy dwelt in safety by him, for the captain brought the great ship through flood and storm, and, at last, set it to rest in the sunlit and quiet waters of the sheltering harbour.

68

BENEDICTION AT LAST

"Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."—Deut. 33:29.

It is a wonderfully heartening thing to find that the end of the Pentateuch is one of benediction and blessing. We are accustomed to think of this as related to the New Testament, where the last words are, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." But we think of the Old Testament, and especially of the five books of Moses, as representing Sinai, the giving of the law, lightnings, thunderings, quakings, voices, warnings and pronouncement of judgments. But, here, at the end of the Pentateuch, where we expected gathering clouds and an angry heaven, we find ourselves in a soft and quiet gloaming, where sunset glories are about and around us and peace is everywhere. Ah, but God is a miracle-worker. What can He not do! And what will He not do for those who are His own!

And this is the glory of the scene which is now

before us. "Happy art thou, O Israel." Israel happy? Israel; poor, sinful, wayward, backsliding Israel? How can it be? Well, never mind the psychology of it. There are some things, naturally and supernaturally, which are quite beyond our understanding. But they are not beyond our faith; and above all, they are not beyond God's power. And besides, Moses here is speaking of the divine Alchemist and of a spiritual laboratory, where marvels are done beyond anything known in University spheres. So then—for this is a prophecy—Israel, in spite of sin and sorrow, will one day be transcendently happy, the days of her mourning being once and forever ended.

But more than this, the glory becomes a greater glory; "Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency?" Who is like unto Israel? Was that nation ever anything but a failure? Did not God finally, have to cast her off? Has she not rested for two millenniums under divine displeasure and judgment? What chance has she of goodness and greatness and exaltation? God called her a "worm," and He meant that she was nothing less than a spineless, powerless worm. And yet Moses said, "Who is like unto thee?" And the answer is, "No one!" And the explanation is, that no one is like unto Israel's God.

This God is the shield of Israel's help and the sword of her excellency. Jehovah's shield, there-

fore, will cover the worm, and His sword will fight in its behalf, and the result will be that the worm will be turned, as God has elsewhere said, into "a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth." What wonder, with such a national prospect before him, that Paul the Jew cried out, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God"!

And, yet again, the glory takes on a brighter hue. For Moses ends by triumphantly declaring, "Thou shalt tread upon their high places." Yes, the day is coming in the history of the Jews when the sinners will be saints, when the outcasts will be restored, when the conquered will be conquerors, when the occupiers of valley-depths will be the possessors of mountain-heights, a nation, at last, whose God is Jehovah and whose glory is found fully and forever in Him.

Israel is a type and picture of ourselves. Worms we are, having no comeliness nor power. But there is a God of grace who sits upon heaven's throne, and He is ready to lift us up, and make us beautiful and triumphant in Him. And thus, looking unto Him, we shall find that the end of our days is not darkened night, nor even glowing sunset, but nothing less than radiant splendour, in the presence and glory of our Redeemer-God.

"The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel: and I will bless them."

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